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FREE TRADE AND OTHER FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL

FREE TRADE

AND

OTHER FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES

OF THE

MANCHESTER SCHOOL

SET FORTH IN SELECTIONS FROM
THE SPEECHES AND WRITINGS OF
ITS FOUNDERS AND FOLLOWERS

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

FRANCIS W. HIRST

LONDON AND NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS
45, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1903

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PREFACE

THE character, temper, and aims of the Manchester School are only too liable to misrepresentation at a time when its greatest achievement is being powerfully assailed. The strange fictions which are generated in the heat of an impartial inquiry can only be dispelled by reference to the facts for which they are substituted. In the first and larger half of this volume of selections will be found, not only vivid descriptions of the condition of the United Kingdom under the old system of preferential and protective duties, which preceded the repeal of the Corn Laws, but also an ample and authentic exposition, by Cobden, Bright, Fox, and others, of the arguments which ultimately won the country over to free trade. The course of imperial policy and expenditure during the last seven years has taught us once more that the importance which the Manchester School attached to a policy of peace and retrenchment was not exaggerated. National economy, in the best sense, is now again seen to be the indispensable buttress of free trade, and a standing condition of social and fiscal reforms.

July, 1903.

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade it has been the fashion to talk of the Manchester School with pity or contempt as of an almost extinct sect, well adapted, no doubt, for the commercial drudgery of a little, early Victorian England, but utterly unfitted to meet the exigencies or satisfy the demands of a moving Imperialism. Many of the authors and abettors of public extravagance, and especially of what is called imperial expenditure upon war and armaments, believed themselves to be champions of free trade. It never occurred to them that protection would trickle into the ship, if the plank of economy were removed. But the commercial system of free trade depends for its political safety upon public thrift, because the more the revenue that is required the stronger is the demand of the governing classes that indirect taxation, which bears most heavily upon the poor, shall be increased. During the last three years we have seen indirect taxation increased—'a widening of the basis' it is called—and we have seen how this policy led at last to the revival of protection in the shape of a shilling duty on corn. But the corn tax has only lasted a year. The principle which triumphed in 1846 has survived the challenge of 1902 and received a triumphant vindication in the Budget of 1903. In each case the instrument of victory was a Conservative Premier, under whom the party, the interests, and the opinions opposed to the Manchester School were arrayed in a hostile and apparently invincible phalanx.

With this exception the Manchester School may be said to have directed our commercial policy ever since 1842, and to have exercised until quite recent years a very great

influence upon the foreign and colonial policy of both great parties in the State. Yet its steady and convinced adherents, who could be depended upon in fair weather and foul, never constituted a tithe of the House of Commons. Its two principal instruments, Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone, were converts, who made their submissions more or less unconsciously and reluctantly, after years of unbelief, to the doctrine of Free Trade. Yet the precepts of the Manchester men, who, in conjunction with their allies, the Philosophical Radicals, not only altered the course of British policy, but rewrote the laws and reformed the constitution of the whole British Empire, have never been presented as a whole. The only means by which the student can assuage his curiosity is by collecting quite a number of books, many of which are out of print.

In the last chapter of his famous biography of Cobden Mr. Morley tries to show in a few sentences how the Manchester School may be distinguished from the Philosophical Radicals, and illustrates the distinction by a characteristic difference between Mr. Cobden and Mr. Mill:—

'It was his view of policy as a whole, connected with the movement of wealth and industry all over the world, that distinguished Cobden and his allies from the Philosophic Radicals, who had been expected to form so great and powerful a school in the reformed Parliament. Hume had anticipated him in attacking expenditure, and Mr. Roebuck in preaching self-government in the colonies. It was not until Retrenchment and Colonial Policy were placed in their true relation to the new and vast expansion of commerce and the growth of population, that any considerable number of people accepted them. The Radical party only became effective when it had connected its principles with economic facts. The different points of view of the Manchester School and of the Philosophical Radicals were illustrated in Mr. Mill's opposition to the alterations which Cobden had advocated in international maritime law. Mr. Mill argued that the best way of stopping wars is to make them as onerous as possible to the citizens of the country concerned, and therefore that to protect the goods of the merchants of a belligerent country is to give them one motive the less for hindering their

Government from making war. With all reverence for the ever-admirable author of this argument, it must be pronounced to be abstract and unreal, when compared with Cobden's. You are not likely to prevent the practice of war, he contended; but what you can do is to make it less destructive to the interests and the security of great populations. An argument of this kind rests on a more solid basis, and suggests a wider comprehension of actual facts. In the same way he translated the revolutionary watchword of the Fraternity of Peoples into the language of common sense and practice, and the international sentiment as interpreted by him became an instrument for preserving as well as improving European order. He was justified in regarding his principles as the true Conservatism of modern societies.'

If I were asked to sum up in a sentence the difference and the connection, I would say that the Manchester men were the disciples of Adam Smith and Bentham, while the Philosophical Radicals followed Bentham and Adam Smith.

After Hume—of whose useful work I have ventured to rescue an early specimen—Molesworth is, of all the Philosophical Radicals, most closely associated with the Manchester School. Bentham's watchword, 'Emancipate your colonies,' is the key to the best part of Molesworth's life; and his searching exposure of Colonial Expenditure and Government which appears in this volume was reprinted by the Financial Reform Association as an exposition of Cobdenic policy.

Perhaps the favourite misapprehension about the Manchester School is that in its anxiety to enlarge and secure the freedom of the individual it was not merely jealous but entirely hostile to the activity of the State. This vulgar error may be referred to two main causes. First, the work of the School in the thirty years following the Reform Act was mainly a work of emancipation. The prime necessity of progress was to destroy bad laws and to free society from the chains which fettered its moral and economic development. The second cause was the action of a slow and rather dogmatical section of wealthy adherents, who, after the death of their leader, displayed a real, but narrow and unimaginative, devotion to his principles

by persistently marking time when they should have been pushing forward to the solution of new problems like the land question, which his keen eye had foreseen and marked out for solution. 'If I were five and twenty or thirty,' said Cobden a few months before his death, 'instead of, unhappily, twice that number of years, I would take Adam Smith in hand—I would not go beyond him, I would have no politics in it—I would take Adam Smith in hand, and I would have a League for Free Trade in Land just as we had a League for Free Trade in Corn.' That those who formed and led the Manchester School were averse to increasing the scope and power of Government, except where a very strong case had been made out, no one will deny. Let us take the strongest possible illustration from a letter written by Cobden in 1836 :—

> 'I yield to no man in the world (be he ever so stout an advocate of the Ten Hours' Bill) in a hearty good-will towards the great body of the working classes; but my sympathy is not of that morbid kind which would lead me to despond over their future prospects. Nor do I partake of that spurious humanity which would indulge in an unreasoning kind of philanthropy at the expense of the great bulk of the community. Mine is that masculine species of charity which would lead me to inculcate in the minds of the labouring classes the love of independence, the privilege of self-respect, the disdain of being patronized or petted, the desire to accumulate, and the ambition to rise. I know it has been found easier to please the people by holding out flattering and delusive prospects of cheap benefits to be derived from Parliament rather than by urging them to a course of self-reliance; but while I will not be the sycophant of the great, I cannot become the parasite of the poor.'

Cobden, as the late Lord Farrer once observed, did no doubt underestimate the usefulness of State action, especially in regard to factory legislation, and did overestimate the evils of State intervention. We have learned in the last few years that the State can do a great deal for the poor, especially in large towns, by prescribing certain rules of health and *minimum* standards of air-space and sanitation in their homes,

factories, and workshops. But although Cobden and his friends (wrongly as we now think) disliked factory legislation for adults they were no fanatical or hard-and-fast opponents of State action. And to suggest that men whose whole lives were given up to public and parliamentary life, who constantly sought to extend the power, the activity, and the democratic character of local administration, were mere iconoclasts and enemies of Government is preposterous. Did not Cobden spend six months of his life in obtaining a municipal charter for Manchester? And was it not due to the co-operation of these practical politicians with the Philosophical Radicals that the ideas of Bentham, the greatest of all our constructive statesmen, were printed in the Statute-book? Above all, let these shallow critics of the Manchester School remember how jealously Cobden and Fox, with their Radical comrade, Joseph Hume, preached upon the necessity for improving education. The chief enemy of popular education then, as now, was religion, and especially established religion. For the Anglican hierarchy being established, considered that it had a right to administer national money for its own sectarian purposes, and to give, as it were, an Anglican flavour to all forms of instruction. Bright fought with all his might on the side of the Nonconformists. 'Nothing,' he said in 1847, 'tends more to impede the progress of liberty, nothing is more fatal to independence of spirit in the public, than to add to the powers of the priesthood in matters of education. If you give them such increased powers by legislative enactment, you do more than you could effect by any other means to enslave and degrade a people subject to their influence.' Cobden held that education should be secular, universal, and compulsory—a terrible mouthful for his Lancashire disciples to swallow.

The first great work of the Manchester School was, of course, the repeal of the Corn Laws. It was accomplished by the political education and organization of the people, and by the conversion of the more intelligent members of the

governing classes. There is a fine passage in one of W. J. Fox's speeches against the corn laws, in which he claimed that in all the successive phases of the free-trade cause just and peaceful means had been employed for the attainment of a good end. Fox was speaking in January, 1845—at the beginning of the end—and he described the history of the movement up to that time with his usual freshness and lucidity. It fell into four stages, beginning with the speculations of Adam Smith and other political economists. 'The cause of free trade was then enshrined in scientific volumes; it was an intellectual discovery. The latent powers of the philosopher were employed to make a science of that which theretofore had been a mere chaos of isolated facts. They accomplished this; but they did not realize free trade for the country by so doing, because legislators are not chosen for their knowledge of the science of national prosperity.'

The next stage in the process was that from a science it became a policy:—

> 'Principles were wrought out into their details, and applied to the practical concerns of the country. Exhibition was made gradually in different directions of the way in which trade and commerce were effected. For this change, let us never forget how largely we are indebted to the pages of the *Westminster Review* and to the writings of the author of the *Corn Law Catechism*. That noble veteran in our cause, Colonel Peronet Thompson, may be said to have accomplished this stage in the process almost single-handed, to have advanced the politico-economical science into a national policy.'

Peronet Thompson deserves high praise, but the historian will repair the omission of names at least as important at this stage—Huskisson, Joseph Hume, and Sir H. Parnell. But still, though some improvements of the tariff were effected in the twenties and thirties, the corn laws remained intact, and the country was still groaning and starving under a dead weight of protectionist taxation. Free Trade was not yet a party watchword. Whigs and Tories still hoisted their old banners and fought their old sham fight. It was not until Cobden had

thought the subject out, converted the best of the northern manufacturers, and organized the Anti-Corn-Law League that victory was assured. From that time forward right down to the recent development of fiscal imperialism, no English statesman has ventured to doubt that the prosperity of one nation is good for another, that you cannot reduce your imports without reducing your exports, and that the imposition of any duty either upon an import or upon an export must hamper industry and reduce wealth.

After the establishment of free trade, the most important work done by the Manchester School for humanity, liberty, and progress was its exposition of the political economy of war and of the hideous contrast which the results even of successful wars invariably present to the confident anticipations of their promoters. In investigating the panics, spontaneous or preconcerted, which foster militarism and always pave the way for the enlargement of armaments, Cobden probed the problem with unequalled skill. His 'Three Panics'[1] showed how, in times of peace, France had been accustomed to maintain a naval force 'not greatly varying from the proportion of two-thirds of our own.' It had been the policy of the two Governments to maintain this proportion. and any attempt to disturb it only led to a retaliatory increase, In 1840–41 the French increased their navy almost to an equality with our own. The strain upon our finances was severely felt, and Sir Robert Peel made one of those great original pronouncements, which, coming from a Prime Minister, lend worldly weight to the humble lesson of common sense and morality.

'Is not the time come,' said he, 'when the powerful countries of Europe should reduce those military armaments which they have so sedulously raised? Is not the time come, when they should be prepared to declare that there is no use in such overgrown establishments? What is the advantage of one power

[1] Published in 1862, and included in all the editions of his political writings.

greatly increasing its army and navy? Does it not see that other powers will follow its example? The consequence of this must be, that no increase of relative strength will accrue to any one power; but there must be a universal consumption of the resources of every country in military preparations. They are, in fact, depriving peace of half its advantages, and anticipating the energies of war whenever they may be required.'

Here, then, was a practical policy to lay before the civilized world.

'The true interest of Europe is to come to some one common accord, so as to enable every country to reduce those military armaments which belong to a state of war rather than of peace. I do wish that the councils of every country (or that the public voice and mind, if the councils did not) would willingly propagate such a doctrine.'[1]

The second half of Cobden's political life was mainly devoted to the task of impressing this practical policy upon peoples, parliaments, and governments. How many thousands of lives, how many millions of money have been saved by the partial acceptance of his policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries, by the discredit he brought on the theory of the balance of power, by his earnest and (for a time) successful efforts to limit the cost of the army and navy, by his advocacy of arbitration as the only civilized means for the settlement of disputes between nations, no man can tell. His achievements in this sphere alone give him a place among the immortals.

Another distinguished member of the School, Milner Gibson (whose name is especially remembered in connection with the repeal of the taxes on knowledge), was, I believe, one of the first to give point to Ricardo's moral that if you are to keep Ministers peaceful you must keep them poor. A surplus is always apt to lead to military waste, and every year as the Budget came into view the Manchester politicians stirred up the country to demand the abolition of some oppressive

[1] Speech by Sir Robert Peel. Hansard, vol. lix. pp. 403, 404.

impost. They knew that if this demand were louder and more popular than the cries of the half-pay officers, contractors, and of the whole tribe of panicmongers, then, but then only, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would yield, and the surplus, instead of causing an increase of public waste, would be used to reduce taxation.

'I have observed that there is always a great deal of pressure for an increase of the army and navy, and a great complaint about the defencelessness of the country, whenever there is a surplus income over expenditure. Why, it is a tempting thing, a large heap of money at the table of the Exchequer, and the knowledge, on the part of the "Services," that if John Bull can be sufficiently frightened into the cry for increased defences, there is very good chance of some of the money being divided among them and theirs. Now, they have an eye on the surplus at this moment. I have an eye also on that surplus, which makes me peculiarly interested in this question. I want to apply it to the repeal of the taxes on knowledge ; and, by spreading sound information among the people, to do something for their future happiness and prosperity.'[1]

'It would seem,' adds Mr. Cobden, in his history of the Second Panic (1851–1853), 'as if there were some unseen power behind the Government, always able, unless held in check by an agitation in the country, to help itself to a portion of the national savings, limited only by the taxable patience of the public.'

The action of the leaders of the Manchester School in relation to the Crimean War is memorable and glorious. They did all that was in their power to avert the calamity, to strengthen the hands of Lord Aberdeen, of Mr. Gladstone, and of the pacific members of the Cabinet, against the war party and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our Turcophile ambassador at

[1] From Milner Gibson's speech at Manchester, January 26, 1853. After Cobden and Bright, Milner Gibson was probably the most useful and consistent member of the Manchester School. For his part in the movement for repealing the taxes on knowledge, see p. 258.

Constantinople. In vain. The calamity could not be averted. The nation was only too ready to be misguided by a press which was only too ready to believe, to circulate, and to exaggerate reports of Russian barbarity, and to contrast it with the mythical humanity of 'the noble Turk.' When the war had broken out Cobden tried to restrict it to the sea. When that policy was abandoned, he and Bright, with warm assistance at a later stage from Mr. Gladstone, sought, as opportunities presented themselves, to insist upon the duty of concluding a peace which should secure the ostensible objects originally proposed by our Government. Only those who are old enough to remember the fifties, and those who have well studied a most important and most neglected period of English history, can at all realize the storm of contumely which burst upon the heads of Cobden and Bright. They were deserted by many of their best friends. For months the basest demagogues won applause by denouncing them as traitors. But a few years passed, and every man of sense and every statesman of repute acknowledged that the war had been a great mistake, that its objects were either unattained or not worth attainment, that we had 'put our money'—as Lord Salisbury long afterwards observed—'on the wrong horse.'

In 1857 Palmerston was beaten by a combination of Peelites, Tories, and Manchester men, who united to censure the Government for its conduct in the affair of the lorcha Arrow. But the war fever had not worn off. Palmerston appealed to the country to support his barbarous policy in China, and won what appeared to be a complete triumph. The Manchester School and its allies were thought to have received a crushing blow. Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, Fox, and Miall all lost their seats. But opinions and principles cannot be crushed by electoral reverses, and a letter from Bright to Cobden 'put the case exactly as, to a historical observer five and twenty years later, it would seem that it ought to have been put'[1]:—

[1] Morley's *Life of Cobden*, chap. viii.

'In the sudden break up of the "School," of which we have been the chief professors, we may learn how far we have been, and are, ahead of the public opinion of our time. We purpose not to make a trade of politics, and not to use as may best suit us the prejudices of our countrymen for our own advantage, but rather to try to square the politics of the country with the maxims of common sense and of a plain morality. The country is not yet ripe for this, but it is far nearer being so than at any former period, and I shall not despair of a revolution in opinion which shall within a few years greatly change the aspect of affairs with reference to our foreign policy. During the comparatively short period since we entered public life, see what has been done. Through our labours mainly the whole creed of millions of people, and of the statesmen of our day, has been totally changed on all the questions which affect commerce and customs, duties and taxation. They now agree to repudiate as folly what, twenty years ago, they accepted as wisdom. Look again at our colonial policy. Through the labours of Molesworth, Roebuck, and Hume, more recently supported by us and by Gladstone, every article in the creed which directed our colonial policy has been abandoned, and now men actually abhor the notion of undertaking the government of the colonies; on the contrary, they give to every colony that asks for it a constitution as democratic as that which exists in the United States.'

After a few words on parliamentary reform, then slowly ripening for another advance, Mr. Bright continued—

'But if on commercial legislation, on colonial policy, on questions of the suffrage, and, I might have added, on questions of the Church—for a revolution in opinion is apparent there also—we see this remarkable change, why should we despair of bringing about an equally great change in the sentiments of the people with regard to foreign affairs? Palmerston and his press are at the bottom of the excitement that has lately prevailed; he will not last long as Minister or as man. I see no one ready to accept his mantle when it drops from him. Ten years hence, those who live so long may see a complete change on the questions on which the public mind has been recently so active and so much mistaken.'[1]

And so it turned out. In less than a year Palmerston

[1] Letter from Bright to Cobden, April 16, 1857. Morley's *Life of Cobden*, chap. viii.

was out of office. Within seven years Gladstone, after Peel the most powerful and whole-hearted Minister of the Manchester doctrines, was master of policy and expenditure. Eleven years later he was to form a Government, with Bright as his most trusted colleague, which put into operation in every department of public life the principles of the Manchester School. And it may with confidence be asserted that from 1862 to 1882, with the exception of a brief and showy episode of Disraelite Imperialism, British policy at home and abroad was stamped with the Cobdenic stamp. The reform of the tariff was completed; the national debt was reduced, and the national credit was marvellously improved. Armaments were severely limited. National prosperity followed, and was not attended by any relaxation of public economy; small wars were frowned upon, great wars were avoided. Some of the worst mistakes were most nobly rectified. The *Alabama* folly issued in a triumph for the cause of arbitration. The annexation of the Transvaal issued in a triumph—to be undone at the end of the century—for the cause of self-government. The Imperialism of 1878 received its quietus in the general elections of 1880. And throughout the period wages were steadily rising, pauperism as steadily diminishing, trade advancing by leaps and bounds. In a word, the nation was progressing, through good government, economy, and wise legislation, to a state of comfort and prosperity never realized before.

The year 1860 is a red-letter year in the annals of the Manchester School. Then it was that Cobden successfully negotiated the commercial treaty with France (virtually a treaty with the whole world), which enabled Mr. Gladstone to reduce the number of dutiable articles in our tariff by one great financial stroke from 419 to 48. In 1842, when Peel's operations began, they numbered more than a thousand. In 1860, moreover, Mr. Gladstone proposed the repeal of the excise duty on paper, and carried it in the following year, thus putting an end to the last of the taxes on knowledge, the

advertisement duty having been repealed in 1853, and the stamp duty in 1855. In autumn of the same year Lincoln was elected President of the United States, and this great victory for the Abolitionists immediately led to the secession of the Southern States and the civil war between the North and South. From the very first Bright saw the true meaning of the struggle. It was, in the first place, a battle for human liberty, and, secondly, a battle for the maintenance of the Republic. He was not surprised to find the aristocracy and governing classes of England ranged on the Southern side. Privilege, as he said in a fine appeal to the working-classes, naturally hated the American Republic; for there 'privilege has beheld an afflicting spectacle for many years past. It has beheld thirty millions of men, happy and prosperous, without emperor, without king, without the surroundings of a court, without nobles, except such as are made by eminence in intellect and virtue, without State bishops and State priests—

"Sole vendors of the lore which works salvation,"

without great armies and great navies, without great debt and without great taxes. Privilege has shuddered at what might happen to old Europe if this grand experiment should succeed. But you, the workers,—you, striving after a better time,—you, struggling upwards towards the light, with slow and painful steps,—you have no cause to look with jealousy upon a country which, amongst all the great nations of the globe, is that one where labour has met with the highest honour, and where it has reaped its greatest reward. Are you aware of the fact, that in fifteen years, which are but as yesterday when it is past, two and a half millions of your countrymen have found a home in the United States; that a population equal nearly, if not quite, to the population of this great city —itself equal to no mean kingdom—has emigrated from these shores? In the United States there has been, as you know, an open door for every man; and millions have entered into it, and have found rest.'

At first even Cobden was inclined to think that the Southerners (who passed for free traders and seemed only to be asking for autonomy) should have been allowed to secede; but he soon came round to his friends' view, and their combined strength was strained to the utmost to preserve the neutrality of the English Government. As it was, the fitting out of the *Alabama* in an English port almost brought us into collision with the American Republic. The havoc wrought by this privateer led to heavy claims against Great Britain; but Bright had the satisfaction of living to see these claims submitted to an international tribunal sitting at Geneva, and the award satisfied by the payment (in 1872) of a sum about equal to the cost of two weeks of the late Boer War. No one would have more rejoiced at the result than Cobden, who saw in international arbitration a most hopeful machinery for consummating peace and good will among nations. No one would more heartily have echoed Gladstone's description of 'the fine imposed on this country' as 'dust in the balance compared with the moral value of the example set when these two great nations of England and America, which are among the most fiery and most jealous in the world with regard to anything that touches national honour, went in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal to dispose of these painful differences rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword.'

It must be recognized that during the last ten years our governing classes have recoiled from the doctrines of the Manchester School. The Imperialism of Pitt and North and Palmerston and Disraeli has been revived. The annual expenditure on armaments has been doubled. A sum not far short of 300 millions has been spent in attempts to add reluctant subjects to the Empire. Great additions have been made to taxation; and, to crown all, Mr. Chamberlain, an old colleague of Mr. Bright, has thrown over Free Trade, and is urging the country to go back to that antique system of protectionist and differential duties which was destroyed by the

Manchester School of politicians. Yet such is the *prestige* of free trade that nearly all those who ask for preferential dealings with the colonies, and for retaliation against our largest and richest customers, profess that they are favourable to free trade as an abstract principle; and some of them confidently assert that if Cobden and Bright were alive they would be followers of Mr. Chamberlain. In this book will be found authentic documents, which cannot but dispel many 'sleek illusions.' If the new policy is good, let it justify itself. It may appeal in some of its articles to Cromwell, in others to Pitt, in others to Disraeli. But if it seeks to make the Manchester School a party to its action, and to found itself on Manchester doctrines, its case will prove to be unarguable in the court of history.

About the arrangement of this book, little need be said. A glance at the table of contents will show exactly what is to be found in it; and the index has been carefully compiled in order that readers may find their way readily to the various subjects and controversies in which the Manchester School was engaged. A good index seemed in this case particularly desirable, now that the whole battle-ground of the Manchester School, from Corn Laws to Education, is to be the scene of a similar and almost identical contest. I have tried in this volume to do tardy justice to W. J. Fox ('Fox of Oldham'), one of the greatest orators of the nineteenth century, and a most stalwart champion of freedom, to rescue Molesworth from his biographer, and to illustrate the splendid services rendered by Milner Gibson to the newspaper press, the book trade, journalists, authors, and readers. I have not forgotten Joseph Hume, the patriarch of retrenchment, who, on entering Parliament, placed himself at the door of the national exchequer, and watched incomings and outgoings with the vigilance of an inquisitor, torturing every year the pensioners and the sinecurists, and gradually turning them out of doors.

Part I. consists of Cobden's first pamphlet, in which are

already formulated nearly all the destructive doctrines of the Manchester School. Part II. is concerned with the repeal of the Corn Laws, and includes a selection of speeches and writings sufficient to show how the leaders of the Manchester School presented the case for cheap and untaxed bread and the abolition of our protective and preferential system to the labouring classes, the manufacturers, and the farmers. Those who would read the story of the greatest and most fruitful of all peaceful agitations will turn to Morley's *Life of Cobden* and Mongredien's *History of the Free Trade Movement.* If they would know something of the geographical distribution of Free Traders and its sturdy supporters in Lancashire and Yorkshire (from first to last the backbone of the movement), they will turn to Prentice's *History of the League.* Nor must they omit the collections of Cobden's speeches and writings, or of Bright's speeches, or the works of Fox. What this volume does is to make available a great fund of material collected from many different sources. I wish I could record the good work done in Scotland, the heroic exertions of Manchester, Rochdale, and Huddersfield, which, small and comparatively poor as it was, subscribed, in 1843, over £1800 (more than any other town in Yorkshire) to the funds of the League. If ever a history worthy of the movement should be written, it would tell of heroic townsmen as well as of heroic towns. Such names as Ashton, Ashworth, Bazley, Crossley, Marshall, Philips, Potter, Rathbone, Salt, Schwann, Thomasson, Robert Wallace ('stout old Wallace of Kelly,' as Cobden called him), Willans, and George Wilson, chairman of the League, would not be forgotten. Editors like Edward Baines, Alexander Ireland, Samuel Lucas, Abraham Paulton, Archibald Prentice, would play their old part in the drama. Staunch Benthamites like Francis Place and Dr. Bowring, Colonel Peronet Thompson, a Liberal of the old school, whose *Catechism of the Corn Laws* was written ten years before the controversy became a hand-to-hand struggle, Villiers, who led the Free Traders in

Parliament till Cobden appeared, Elliott, the Corn Law rhymer, are names that have already been inscribed on the tablets of Free Trade.

The Third Part is concerned with wars, panics, and armaments, a trilogy of woes which still finds actors and applause in the most civilized and democratic communities. Here we see the moral spirit which penetrates and inspires the whole Cobdenic system.

The extracts contained in Part IV., on colonial and fiscal policy, are of peculiar interest at the present time. It is not generally known that Cobden ever delivered himself upon the subject of the German Zollverein, nor has that letter ever been republished since it first appeared in the journal of the League. The companion letter by the late Lord Farrer, I have, with his son's consent and approval, reprinted and revised. Lord Farrer was a true Cobdenite, and of all Cobden's disciples he came nearest to the master in grasp of figures and lucidity of thought and expression. With what indignation, with what fiery and resolute opposition Cobden and Bright would have encountered proposals for returning to that protective and preferential system of which considerable relics were preserved until 1860, can be imagined only by those who recollect their letters and speeches at times when Protection raised its head. The Fifth and last Part, short as it is, may serve to show that the leaders of the Manchester School were alive to other needs less pressing, indeed, in the forties, but not less important than the emancipation of trade. The promotion of education, the development of municipal life, the reform of the land laws, all found a place in Cobden's scheme, and all that has happened since his death has justified the wisdom of his choice.

PART I

ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND AMERICA

1835

'The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible.'—Washington's Farewell Address to the American People.

reappear, they would be startled to find, in the present relations of the Continent, no vestige of that perfect adjustment which had been purchased at the price of so much blood. And yet we have able writers and statesmen of the present day, who would advocate a war to prevent a derangement of what we now choose to pronounce the just equipoise of the power of Europe.

War for the balance of power in Europe.

For a period of six hundred years, the French and English people had never ceased to regard each other as natural enemies. Scarcely a generation passed over its allotted section of this vast interval of time, without sacrificing its victims to the spirit of national hate. It was reserved for our own day to witness the close of a feud, the bloodiest, the longest, and yet, in its consequences, the most nugatory of any that is to be found in the annals of the world. Scarcely had we time to indulge the first emotions of pity and amazement at the folly of past ages, when, as if to justify to the letter the sarcasm of Hume, when alluding to another subject,[1] we, the English people, are preparing, through the vehicles of opinion, the public press, to enter upon a hostile career with Russia.

Russia, and no longer France, is the chimera that now haunts us in our apprehension for the safety of Europe: whilst Turkey, for the first time, appears to claim our sympathy and protection against the encroachments of her neighbours; and, strange as it may appear to the politicians of a future age, such is the prevailing sentiment of hostility towards the Russian government at this time in the public mind, that, with but few additional provocatives administered to it by a judicious minister through the public prints, a conflict with that Christian power, in defence of a Mahomedan people more than a thousand miles distant from our shores, might be made palatable, nay,

[1] 'Though, in a future age, it will probably become difficult to persuade some nations that any human two-legged creature could ever embrace such principles. And it is a thousand to one but those nations themselves shall have something full as absurd in their own creed, to which they will give a most implicit consent.'

popular, with the British nation. It would not be difficult to find a cause for this antipathy: the impulse, as usual with large masses of human beings, is a generous one, and arises, in great part, from emotions of pity for the gallant Polish people, and of indignation at the conduct of their oppressors—sentiments in which we cordially and zealously concur: and, if it were the province of Great Britain to administer justice to all the people of the earth—in other words, if God had given us, as a nation, the authority and the power, together with the wisdom and the goodness, sufficient to qualify us to deal forth His vengeance—then should we be called upon in this case to rescue the weak from the hands of their spoilers. But do we possess these favoured endowments? Are we armed with the powers of Omnipotence; or, on the contrary, can we discover another people rising into strength with a rapidity that threatens inevitably to overshadow us? Again, do we find ourselves to possess the virtue and the wisdom essential to the possession of supreme power; or, on the other hand, have we not at our side, in the wrongs of a portion of our own people, a proof that we can justly lay claim to neither?

The case of Russia and Turkey.

Ireland and the United States of America ought to be the subjects of our inquiry at this period, when we are, apparently, preparing ourselves to engage as parties to a question involving countries with which we are but remotely, and in comparison very little, interested. Before entering upon some reflections under each of these heads, we shall call the consideration of our readers to the affairs of Russia and Turkey; and we shall use, as the text of our remarks, a pamphlet that has recently made its appearance under the title of 'England, France, Russia, and Turkey,' to which our attention was first attracted by the favourable comments bestowed upon it by the influential portion of the daily press.

The writer [1] appears to be versed in the diplomatic mysteries

[1] Mr. Urquhart, formerly Secretary of the English Embassy at Constantinople.

of the Courts of St. Petersburg and Constantinople: indeed, he hints that he has been himself a party to the negotiations carried on with the Sublime Porte. He says, p. 77—'The details into which we have already entered may probably contain internal evidence of our opinion not having been formed in a closet, remote from the subject we are treating.' And the concluding words of the pamphlet are calculated to lead to a similar inference; and they are moreover curious, as illustrating the tone of feeling with which the author regards the Russian government:—'Our words have been fewer than our thoughts; and, while we have to regret abler hands have not wielded our arms, we owe it to our subject to state that others unproduced, prudence forbade to draw, until the *hour of retribution arrives*.'

After a preliminary appeal to the sympathies of his readers in favour of Poland, he proceeds to ask—

'Is the substance of Turkey to be added to the growth of Russia? Is the mammoth of the Sarmatian plains to become the leviathan of the Hesperian seas? Is another victim to be sacrificed within so short a time on the same altar, and because the same trifling succour is again withheld? Are the remains of Turkey to be laid upon the tomb of Poland, to exclude every ray of hope, and render its doom irrevocable?'

To what extent this trifling succour is meant to go, will be explained in the writer's own words, by-and-by. But we propose, in this place, to inquire, what are the motives that England can have to desire to preserve the Ottoman Empire at the risk of a war, however trifling? In entering on this question, we shall, of course, premise that no Government has the right to plunge its people into hostilities, except in defence of their own national honour or interests. Unless this principle be made the rule of all, there can be no guarantee for the peace of any one country, so long as there may be found a people whose grievances may attract the sympathy, or invite the interference of another state. How, then, do we find our honour or interests concerned in defending the Turkish territory against the encroachments of its Christian neighbour? It

is not alleged that we have an alliance with the Ottoman Porte, which binds us to preserve its empire intact; nor does there exist, with regard to this country, a treaty between Russia and Great Britain (as was the case with respect to Poland) by which we became jointly guarantees for its separate national existence. The writer we are quoting puts the motive for our interference in a singular point of view; he says—

'This obligation is imposed upon us, as members of the European community, by the approaching annihilation of another of our compeers. It is imposed upon us by the necessity of maintaining the consideration due to ourselves—the first element of political power and influence.'

From this it would appear to be the opinion of our author, that our being one of the nations of Europe imposes on us, besides the defence of our own territory, the task of upholding the rights, and perpetuating the existence, of all the other powers of the Continent—a sentiment common, we fear, to a very large portion of the English public.

In truth, Great Britain has, in contempt of the dictates of prudence and self-interest, an insatiable thirst to become the peacemaker abroad; or, if that benevolent task fail her, to assume the office of gensdarme, and keep in order, gratuitously, all the refractory nations of Europe. Hence does it arise, that, with an invulnerable island for our territory, more secure against foreign molestation than is any part of the coast of North America, we magnanimously disdain to avail ourselves of the privileges which nature offers to us, but cross the ocean, in quest of quadripartite treaties or quintuple alliances, and, probably, to leave our own good name in pledge for the debts of the poorer members of such confederacies. To the same spirit of overweening national importance may in great part be traced the ruinous wars, and yet more ruinous subsidies of our past history. Who does not now see, that, to have shut ourselves in our own ocean fastness, and to have guarded its shores and its commerce by our fleets, was the line of policy we ought never to have

Unwisdom of entangling alliances.

departed from—and who is there that is not now *feeling*, in the burthen of our taxation, the dismal errors of our departure from this rule during the last war? How little wisdom we have gathered along with these bitter fruits of experience, let the subject of our present inquiry determine!

Judging from another passage in this pamphlet, it would appear that England and France are now to be the sole dictators of the international relations of all Europe. The following passage is dictated by that pure spirit of English vanity which has already proved so expensive an appendage to our character; and which, unless allayed by increased knowledge among the people, or fairly crushed out of us by our financial burthens, will, we fear, carry us still deeper into the vortex of debt:—

'The squadrons of England and France anchored in the Bosphorus, they dictate their own terms to Turkey; to Russia they proclaim that from that day they intend to arbitrate supremely between the nations of the earth.'

War for honour.

We know of but one way in which the honour of this country may be involved in the defence and preservation of the Turkish empire; and that is, through the indiscreet meddling in the intrigues of the seraglio, on the part of our diplomatists. After a few flourishes of the pen, in the style and spirit of the above quotations, shall have passed between the gentlemen of the rival embassies of St. James' and St. Petersburg, who knows but the English nation may some day be surprised by the discovery that it is compromised in a quarrel from which there is no honourable escape but by the disastrous course of a long and ruinous war?

If our honour be not committed in this case, still less shall we find, by examining a little more at length, that our *interests* are involved in the preservation of Turkey. To quote again from the pamphlet before us:—

'Suffice it to say, that the countries consuming to the yearly value of thirty millions[1] of our exports, would be placed under the

[1] Official value

immediate control of the coalition (Russia, Prussia, and Austria), and, of course, under the regulations of the Russian tariff; not as it is to-day, but such as it would be when the mask is wholly dropped. What would be the effect on the internal state of England if a considerable diminution of exportation occurred? But it is not only the direct effects of the tariffs of the coalition that are to be apprehended: would it not command the tariffs of Northern and Southern America?'

Passing over, as too chimerical for comment, the allusion to the New World, we here have the argument which has, immediately or remotely, decided us to undertake almost every war in which Great Britain has been involved—viz. *the defence of our commerce.* And yet it has, over and over again, been proved to the world that violence and force can never prevail against the natural wants and wishes of mankind: in other words, that despotic laws against freedom of trade never can be executed. 'Trade cannot, will not be forced; let other nations prohibit by what severity they please, interest will prevail: they may embarrass their own trade, but cannot hurt a nation whose trade is free, so much as themselves.' So said a writer[1] a century ago, whilst experience down to our own day has done nothing but confirm the truth of his maxims; and yet people would frighten us into war, to prevent the forcible annihilation of our trade! Can any proofs be offered how visionary are such fears, more conclusive than are to be found in the history of Napoleon's celebrated war against English commerce? Let us briefly state a few particulars of this famous struggle. The subject, though familiar to everybody, is one the moral of which cannot be too frequently enforced.

War for trade.

And against trade.

The British Islands were, in 1807, declared by Bonaparte in a state of blockade, by those decrees which aimed at the total destruction of the trade of Great Britain. The Berlin and Milan edicts declared—

1. The British Isles were in a state of blockade. 2. All

[1] Sir Matthew Decker.

commerce and correspondence were forbidden. All English letters were to be seized in the post-houses. 3. Every Englishman, of whatever rank or quality, found in France, or the countries allied with her, was declared a prisoner of war. 4. All merchandise or property, of whatever kind, belonging to English subjects, was declared lawful prize. 5. All articles of English manufacture, and articles produced in her colonies, were, in like manner, declared contraband, and lawful prize.

France, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Holland, Italy, and the States of Germany, joined in this conspiracy against the commerce of England. To enforce more effectually these prohibitions, commissioners of rank were appointed to each of the principal sea-ports of the Continent. Now, let us mark well the result of this great confederation, which was formed for the avowed purpose of annihilating us as a trading people. The following is an account of the declared value of our exports of British products for each of the years mentioned, ending 5th of January :—

1804	£36,100,000
1805	37,100,000
1806	37,200,000
1807	39,700,000
1808	36,400,000
1809	36,300,000

It must be borne in mind, that the proclamation of war against our trade, above mentioned, was dated 1807. It appears, then, by the preceding tabular view, that our commerce sustained a loss to the extent of about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in 1808 and 1809, as compared with 1806 and 1807; whilst the amount of exports in the year 1808, or 1809, if compared with the mean or average amount of the above six years, shows a diminution only of about two per cent. And all this took place, be it remembered, when two-thirds of our foreign trade was confined to Europe.[1]

[1] It would be amusing, and full of romantic interest, to detail some of the ten thousand justifiable arts invented to thwart this unnatural coalition,

It is singular to observe, that, by the following table, the declared value of our exports, during the last six years, has remained nearly stationary, at a point varying from the average of the former series of years only by a fraction.

Below is a table of the exports of the products of British industry for six years, ending 1833 :—

1828	£36,400,000
1829	36,200,000
1830	35,200,000
1831	37,700,000
1832	36,600,000
1833	36,000,000

But it must be borne in view, that, as the price of the raw materials of manufactures, such as wool, cotton, silk, iron, etc., together with the price of grain, has undergone a vast depreciation since the former periods, of course the actual exchangeable value of the money amounts in the second table is very much greater than in the first.

In fact, the official value of our exports appears to have doubled, whilst the real or declared value has remained stationary. Bearing all this in mind, still, if we take into consideration the great increase of our exports, since 1809, to the Americas, and to Asia—the quarters where our commerce has been principally increasing—and if we also recollect the higher rate of profits at the earlier periods, it becomes a question if our trade with Europe, notwithstanding its rapid increase in population and wealth, has been benefited by the peace. It is exceedingly doubtful whether, whilst we were engaged in a war for the avowed emancipation of our commerce, our merchants

which, of necessity, converted almost every citizen of Europe into a smuggler. Bourrienne, who was himself one of the commissioners at Hamburgh, gives some interesting anecdotes in his 'Memoirs' under this head. The writer is acquainted with a merchant who was interested in a house that employed five hundred horses in transporting British goods, many of which were landed in Sclavonia, and thence conveyed overland to France, at a charge of about £28 a cwt.—more than fifty times the present freight of merchandise from London to Calcutta.

were not, all the while, carrying on a more gainful traffic with the Continent than they now do, when its people have become our bloodless rivals at the loom and the spinning frame.

Where, then, is the wisdom of our fighting European battles in defence of a commerce which knows so well of itself how to elude all its assailants? And what have we to show as a per-contra for the four hundred millions of debt incurred in our last continental wars?

We have dwelt at greater length upon this point, because the advocates of an intermeddling policy always hold up the alluring prospect of benefiting commerce; and we think we have said enough to prove, that Russian violence cannot destroy, or even sensibly injure our trade. But it here becomes proper to ask, Are we warranted in the presumption that Russia is less inclined than other nations for trading with us? Our author, indeed, says, p. 90—

'Is it for England to allow an empire, a principle of whose existence is freedom of commerce, to be swallowed up by the most restrictive power on the face of the earth? Is it for England to allow the first commercial position in the world to be occupied by such a power? Is it for England to allow freedom of commerce to be extinguished in the only portion of Europe where it exists?'

British trade with Russia and Turkey compared.

We are at a loss to account for the ignorance that exists with reference to the comparative importance of our trade with Russia and with Turkey. The following tables exhibit the amounts of our exports to each of the two countries at the dates mentioned:—

Exports to Russia.		Exports to Turkey.	
A.D.	£	A.D.	£
1700	60,000	1700	220,000
1750	100,000	1750	135,000
1790	400,000	1790	120,000
1800	1,300,000	1800	165,000
1820	2,300,000	1820	800,000[1]

[1] M'Culloch's *Dict.*, 2nd edit., p. 671.

By which it will be seen that whilst Turkey has, in more than a century, quadrupled the amount of her purchases, Russia has, in the same interval of time, increased her consumption of our goods nearly forty-fold. Our exports, since the year 1700, have increased in a more rapid ratio to Russia than to any other country of Europe.

The rise of the commerce of St. Petersburg is unparalleled by anything we meet with in Europe, out of England. This city was founded in 1703; in 1714 only sixteen ships entered the port, whilst in 1833 twelve hundred and thirty-eight vessels arrived, and of which no less a proportion than six hundred and ninety-four were British.

Nor must it be forgotten, in drawing a comparison between the value of our trade with Russia and that with Turkey, that whilst the former has, until very recently, possessed but little sea-coast, with but one good port, and that closed by ice one half of the year, the latter had, down to the date at which we have purposely brought the comparison (when the Greek Islands still formed a portion of the Turkish empire), more than double the extent of maritime territory of any power in Europe, situated in latitudes, too, the most favourable for commerce, including not only the best harbours in the world, but the largest river in Europe.

Neither must it be forgotten that the natural products of the Russian empire are restricted to corn, hemp, tallow, timber, and hides, with a few minor commodities; and that of these, the two important articles of corn and timber are subjected to restrictive, or we might almost say, prohibitive, duties at our hands; whilst Turkey contains the soil and climate adapted for producing almost every article of commerce with the exception probably only of sugar and tea. We need only mention corn, timber, cotton-wool, sheep's-wool, wood and drugs for dyeing, wine and spirits, tobacco, silk, tallow, hides and skins, coffee, spices, and bullion—to exhibit the natural fertility of a country which is now rendered sterile by the brutalizing rule of Mahomedanism. Nor can it be said that

commerce is wholly free in Turkey, since the exportation of silk is burthened with a duty, and it is prohibited to export grain, or any other article of necessity, including the product of the mines. It is true that this otherwise barbarous government has set an example to more civilized countries, by its moderate import duties on foreign productions; and this, we suspect, is the secret of that surprising tenacity of life which exists in the Ottoman empire, notwithstanding the thousand organic diseases that are consuming its body politic. But what avails to throw open the ports of a country to our ships, if the population will not labour to obtain the produce wherewith to purchase our commodities?

Plains, which Dr. Clarke compares to the fairest portions of Kent, capable of yielding the best silk and cotton, abound in Syria; but despotic violence has triumphed even over nature; and this province, which once boasted of Damascus and Antioch, of Tyre, Sidon, and Aleppo, has by the oppressive exactions of successive pachas, become little better than a deserted waste.

Results of Turkish tyranny.

'Everywhere,' says Volney, speaking of Asiatic Turkey, 'everywhere I saw only tyranny and misery, robbery and devastation. I found daily on my route abandoned fields, deserted villages, cities in ruins. Frequently I discovered antique monuments, remains of temples, of palaces, and of fortresses; pillars, aqueducts, and tombs: this spectacle led my mind to meditate on past times, and excited in my heart profound and serious thought. I recalled those ancient ages when twenty famous nations existed in these countries: I painted to myself the Assyrian on the banks of the Tigris, the Chaldean on those of the Euphrates, the Persian reigning from the Indus to the Mediterranean. I numbered the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria, the warlike states of the Philistines, and the commercial republics of Phœnicia. This Syria, said I, now almost unpeopled, could then count a hundred powerful cities; its fields were covered with towns, villages, and hamlets. Everywhere appeared cultivated fields, frequented roads, crowded habitations. What, alas! has become of those ages of abundance and of life? What of so many brilliant creations of the

hand of man? Where are the ramparts of Nineveh, the walls of Babylon, the palaces of Persepolis, the temples of Baalbec and Jerusalem? Where are the fleets of Tyre, the docks of Arad, the looms of Sidon, and that multitude of sailors, of pilots, of merchants, of soldiers? Where are those labourers, those harvests, those flocks, and that crowd of living beings that then covered the face of the earth? Alas! I have surveyed this ravaged land—I have visited the places which were the theatre of so much splendour—and have seen only solitude and desertion. The temples are crumbled down; the palaces are overthrown; the ports are filled up; the cities are destroyed; the earth, stripped of its inhabitants, is only a desolate place of tombs.'

No less hideous is the picture given to us by another eloquent eyewitness of the desolation of this once flourishing region.

'A few paltry shops expose nothing but wretchedness to view, and even these are frequently shut, from apprehension of the passage of a Cadi.

'Not a creature is to be seen in the streets, not a creature at the gates, except now and then a peasant gliding through the gloom, concealing under his garments the fruits of his labour, lest he should be robbed of his hard earnings by the rapacious soldier. The only noise heard from time to time is the galloping of the steed of the desert; it is the janissary, who brings the head of the Bedouin, or returns from plundering the unhappy fellah.'[1]

A still more recent traveller, and one of our own countrymen, has these emphatic words, when speaking of the Turkish territory: 'Wherever the Osmanli has trod, devastation and ruin mark his steps, civilization and the arts have fled, and made room for barbarism and the silence of the desert and the tomb.'[2]

But why need we seek for foreign testimony of the withering and destroying influences of Mahomedanism? The Turks themselves, have a proverb, which says, 'Where the Sultan's horse has trod, there no grass grows.'

'And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod.'

BYRON.

[1] Chateaubriand. [2] Macfarlane's *Turkey*.

Our limits do not allow us to dwell on this portion of our task; suffice it to say, that, beneath the sway of Ottoman violence, the pursuits of agriculture and commerce are equally neglected, in regions that once comprised the mart and granary of the world. *No ship was ever seen to leave a Turkish port, manned with Turkish sailors, upon the peaceful errand of foreign mercantile traffic.* On the ocean, as upon land, this fierce people have always been the scourge of humanity, and a barrier to the progress of commerce and civilization. In their hands, Smyrna, which was termed by the ancients the ornament of Asia, and Constantinople, chosen for the unrivalled seat of empire by one who possessed the sovereignty of the world—these two cities, adapted by nature to become the centres of a vast trade, are now, through the barbarism and indolence of their rulers, little better than nurseries of the plague!

What shall we say more to prove that England can have no interest in perpetuating the commercial bondage of such a land as we have been describing?

Before quitting the consideration of this part of our subject, we will for a moment give way to our imagination, and picture the results that would follow, supposing that the population of the United States of America could be moved from their present position on the earth's surface, and in a moment be substituted in the place of the inhabitants of Turkey. Very little difference of latitude opposes itself to the further supposition, that the several pachalics, being transformed into free states, should be populated by the natives of such districts of the New World as gave the fittest adaptation to their previous habits of labour. Now let us picture this empire after it had been for fifty years only subject to the laws, the religion, and the industry of such a people.

Constantinople, outrivalling New York, may be painted with a million of free citizens as the focus of all the trade of Eastern Europe. Let us conjure up the thousands of miles of railroads carrying to the very extremities of this

empire—not the sanguinary satrap—but the merchandise and the busy traders of a free State; conveying not the firman of a ferocious sultan, armed with death to the trembling slave, but the millions of newspapers and letters which stimulate the enterprise and excite the patriotism of an enlightened people. Let us imagine the Bosphorus and the sea of Marmora swarming with steamboats connecting the European and Asiatic continents by hourly departures and arrivals; or issuing from the Dardanelles to reanimate once more with life and fertility the hundred islands of the Archipelago; or conceive the rich shores of the Black Sea in the power of the New Englander, and the Danube pouring down its produce from the plains of Moldavia and Wallachia, now subject to the plough of the hardy Kentuckian. Let us picture the Carolinians, the Virginians, and the Georgians, transplanted to the coasts of Asia Minor, and behold its hundreds of cities again bursting from the tomb of ages, to recall religion and civilization to the spot from whence they first issued forth upon the world. Alas! that this should be only an illusion of the fancy!

An imaginary transposition.

There remains another argument in favour of an interposition on our part in defence of Turkey for us to notice; and it points to the danger our colonies might be in, from any movements which Russia should make eastward. 'Our Indian possessions,' says the pamphlet before quoted: 'shall we fight for them on the Dnieper, as directing the whole Mussulman nation, or shall we fight for them on the Indus, at Bagdad, or in Persia, single-handed, close to the insurrection she will raise in her rear, and when she is in possession of Turkey?'

We might have passed over this point as too chimerical for comment, were it not that it involves a question upon which, we believe, there is greater misapprehension than upon any other subject that engages the attention of our countrymen. Supposing Russia or Austria to be in possession of the Turkish dominions, would she not find her attention and resources

The supposed danger to India.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE LIBRARY

far too abundantly occupied in *retaining* the sovereignty over fifteen millions of fierce and turbulent subjects, animated with warlike hatred to their conquerors, and goaded into rebellion by the all-powerful impulse of a haughty and intolerant religion, to contemplate adding still further to her embarrassments by declaring war with England, and giving the word of march to Hindostan? Who does not perceive that it could not, for ages at least, add to the *external power* of either of these states, if she were to get possession of Turkey by force of arms? Is Russia stronger abroad by her recent perfidious incorporation of Polish territory? Would Holland increase her power if she were to reconquer her Belgic provinces to-morrow? Or, to come to our own doors, for example, was Great Britain more powerful whilst, for centuries, she held Ireland in disaffected subjection to her rule; or was she not rather weakened, by offering, in the sister island, a vulnerable point of attack to her continental enemies?

But supposing, merely by way of argument, that Russia meditated hostile views towards our eastern colonies.

Constantinople is about three thousand miles distant from Calcutta: are our Indian possessions of such value to the British people that we must guard them with operations so extended and so costly as would be necessary if the shores of the Bosphorus are to be made the outpost for our armies of the Ganges? Surely it becomes a momentous question, to the already over-burdened people of England, to ascertain what advantages are to be reaped from enterprises like this, which, whatever other results they may chance to involve, are certain to entail increased taxation on themselves.

Nothing, we believe, presents so fair a field for economical analysis, even in this age of new lights, as the subject of colonization. We can, of course, only briefly allude to the question; but, in doing so, we suggest it as one that claims the investigation of independent public writers, and of all those members of the legislature who are of and for the people, distinct from selfish views or

The cost of colonial expansion.

aristocratic tendencies. Spain lies, at this moment, a miserable spectacle of a nation whose own natural greatness has been immolated on the shrine of transatlantic ambition. May not some future historian possibly be found recording a similar epitaph on the tomb of Britain?

In truth, we have been planting, and supporting, and governing countries upon all degrees of habitable, and some that are not habitable, latitudes of the earth's surface; and so grateful to our national pride has been the spectacle, that we have never, for once, paused to inquire if our interests were advanced by so much nominal greatness. Three hundred millions of permanent debt have been accumulated—millions of direct taxation are annually levied—restrictions and prohibitions are imposed upon our trade in all quarters of the world, for the acquisition or maintenance of colonial possessions; and all for what? That we may repeat the fatal Spanish proverb—'The sun never sets on the King of England's dominions.' For we believe that no candid investigator of our colonial policy will draw the conclusion, that we have derived, or shall derive, from it advantages that can compensate for these formidable sacrifices.

Withering influences of the policy of protecting colonial trade by bounties and differential duties.

But we are upon the verge of a novel combination of commercial *necessities*, that will altogether change the relations in which we have hitherto stood with our colonies. We call them necessities, because they will be forced upon us, not from conviction of the wisdom of such changes, but by the irresistible march of events. The New World is destined to become the arbiter of the commercial policy of the Old. We will see in what manner this is in operation.

At the passing of the Negro Emancipation Act an effort was made by the merchants of Liverpool, trading to South America, to prevail on the legislature to abolish the discriminating duties on West India sugar, which operated so severely on the trade with the Brazils. It was finally decided, that the bounty in favour of the importation of our colonial

productions should be continued for ten years. At the end of this period, *if not long before*, therefore, the monstrous impolicy of sacrificing our trade with a new continent, of almost boundless extent of rich territory, in favour of a few small islands, with comparatively exhausted soils, will cease to be sanctioned by the law. What will then follow? If we no longer offer the exclusive privileges of our market to the West Indians, we shall cease, as a matter of justice and necessity, to compel them to purchase exclusively from us. They will be at liberty, in short, to buy wherever they can buy goods cheapest, and to sell in the dearest market. They must be placed in the very same predicament as if they were not a part of his Majesty's dominions. Where, then, will be the semblance of a plea for putting ourselves to the expense of governing and defending such countries? Let us apply the same test to our other colonies.

It is no longer a debatable question, amongst enlightened and disinterested minds, that the privileges which we give to the Canadian exporters of timber to Britain, and by which alone we command a monopoly of that market for our manufactures, are founded on gross injustice to the people of this country, and are calculated to give a forced misdirection, as all such bounties are, to the natural industry of these colonies, by causing the investment of capital in the preparing and shipping of inferior timber, which would otherwise seek its legitimate employment in the pursuit of agriculture. This monopoly must yield to the claims of the United States and Baltic trades. Nor have we been contented with sacrificing our own interests to the promotion of a fictitious prosperity in our colonies, but we destroy the interest of one of these, in the vain hope of benefiting another. Thus, in the same spirit of withering protection, we have awarded to the West Indies a monopoly of trade to Canada, whilst, to the latter, we give the privilege of exclusively supplying the former with corn and timber: and all this whilst, at the same time, these islands lie within half the distance of the shores of the United

Timber.

States, whose maritime districts possess all the identical exchangeable products with Canada, and teem with a population of industrious and enterprising people, eager for a commerce with these prohibited islands.

True, the Government of the United States has lately compelled us, *in self-defence*, to relax from this system; and every one now sees that the same motive prescribes that the commerce of the West Indies be wholly, and without restriction, thrown open to the people of the neighbouring continent, from which it has hitherto been shut out only by means of unnatural prohibitions.

We have said that the New World is the arbiter of the commercial policy of the Old; and we will now see in what way this is the fact in the case of our East Indian trade. Hitherto it has been the custom to impose discriminating duties in favour of the products of these colonies; and this, and this only, has given us the right to compel these dependencies, in return, to restrict themselves to the purchase of our manufactures. We have seen that this restrictive policy must be abandoned in the case of the West Indies and Canada, and still less shall we find it practicable to uphold it in the East. Our leading imports from this quarter must be cotton-wool, silk, indigo, and sugar. The last of these articles, as we have already shown in speaking of the West Indies, the Brazils have, by its successful culture, forced us to remove from the list of protected commodities; whilst the three first, being raw products, in the supply and manufacture of which we are so closely checkmated by the competition of the United States or of European countries, it would be madness to think of subjecting the fabrication of them to restrictive duties, however trifling.

Cotton and sugar.

We shall then be under the necessity of levying the same duties on the cotton, sugar, etc., imported from the East Indies, as on similar products coming from North or South America; and it will follow, of course, that, as we offer no

privileges in our markets to the planters of Hindostan, we can claim none for our manufacturers in theirs. In other words, they must be left at liberty to buy wherever they can purchase cheapest, and to sell where they can do so at the dearest rate; they will, in all respects, be, commercially and fiscally speaking, the same to us as though they did not form a part of his Majesty's dominions. Where, then, will be the plea for subjecting ourselves to the heavy taxation required to maintain armies and navies for the defence of these colonies?

Colonies should be self-supporting and self-depending.

Provided our manufactures be cheaper than those of our rivals, we shall command the custom of these colonies by the same motives of self-interest which bring the Peruvians, the Brazilians, or the natives of North America, to clothe themselves with the products of our industry; and, on the other hand, they will gladly sell to us their commodities through the same all-powerful impulse, provided we offer for them a more tempting price than they will command in other markets.

We have thus hastily and incidentally glanced at a subject which we predict will speedily force itself upon the attention of our politicians; and we know of nothing that would be so likely to conduce to a diminution of our burdens, by reducing the charges of the army, navy, and ordnance (amounting to fourteen millions annually), as a proper understanding of our relative position with respect to our colonial possessions.[1] We are aware that no power was ever yet known, voluntarily, to give up the dominion over a part of its territory. But if it could be made manifest to the trading and industrious portions of this nation, who have no honours, or interested ambition of any kind, at stake in the matter, that, whilst our dependencies are supported at an expense to them, in direct taxation, of more than five millions annually, they serve but as gorgeous and ponderous appendages to swell our ostensible grandeur, but, in reality, to complicate and magnify our

[1] The peace estimates for army, navy, and ordnance for the year 1903–4 amounted to about £69,000,000.

government expenditure, without improving our balance of trade—surely, under such circumstances, it would become at least a question for anxious inquiry with a people so overwhelmed with debt, whether those colonies should not be suffered to support and defend themselves, as separate and independent existences.

Adam Smith and Free Trade.

Adam Smith, more than sixty years ago, promulgated his doubts of the wisdom and profitableness of our colonial policy,[1] at a time, be it well remembered, when we were excluded, by the mother countries, from the South American markets, and when our West Indian possessions appeared to superficial minds an indispensable source of vast wealth to the British empire. Had he lived to our day, to behold the United States of America, after freeing themselves from the dominion of the mother country, become our largest and most friendly commercial connection —had he lived also to behold the free States of South America only prevented from outstripping in magnitude all our other customers by the fetters which an absurd law of exclusive dealing with those very West Indian colonies has imposed on our commerce—how fully must his opinions have coincided with all that we have urged on this subject!

Here let us observe, that it is worthy of surprise how little progress has been made in the study of that science of which Adam Smith was, more than half a century ago, the great luminary. We regret that no society has been formed for the purpose of disseminating a knowledge of the just principles of trade. Whilst agriculture can boast almost as many associations as there are British counties; whilst every city in the kingdom contains its botanical, phrenological, or mechanical institutions, and these again possess their periodical journals (and not merely these, for even *war* sends forth its *United Service Magazine*)—we possess no association of traders, united

[1] See Adam Smith's last chapter. In Mr. Cobden's copy of the *Wealth of Nations* the most striking passages in this last chapter are marked.

together for the common object of enlightening the world upon a question so little understood, and so loaded with obloquy, as free trade.

We have our Banksian, our Linnæan, our Hunterian Societies; and why should not at least our greatest commercial and manufacturing towns possess their Smithian Societies, devoted to the purpose of promulgating the beneficent truths of the *Wealth of Nations*? Such institutions, by promoting a correspondence with similar societies that would probably be organized abroad (for it is our example in questions affecting commerce that strangers follow), might contribute to the spread of liberal and just views of political science, and thus tend to ameliorate the restrictive policy of foreign governments, through the legitimate influence of the opinions of their people. Nor would such societies be fruitless at home. Prizes might be offered for the best essays on the corn question; or lecturers might be sent to enlighten the agriculturalists, and to invite discussion upon a subject so difficult and of such paramount interest to all. The question of the policy or justice of prohibiting the export of machinery might be brought to the test of public discussion; these, and a thousand other questions might, with usefulness, engage the attention of such associations.

But to return to the consideration of the subject more immediately before us.

It will be seen, from the arguments and facts we have urged, and are about to lay before our readers, that we entertain no fears that our interests would be likely to suffer from the aggrandizement of a Christian power at the expense of Turkey, even should that power be Russia. On the contrary, we have no hesitation in avowing it as our deliberate conviction, that not merely Great Britain, but the entire civilized world, will have reason to congratulate itself, the moment when that territory again falls beneath the sceptre of any other European power whatever. Ages must elapse before its favoured region

Russian advance is to be wished for.

will become, as it is by nature destined to become, the seat and centre of commerce, civilization, and true religion; but the first step towards this consummation must be to convert Constantinople again into that which every lover of humanity and peace longs to behold it—the capital of a Christian people. Nor let it be objected by more enlightened believers, that the Russians would plant that corrupted branch of our religion, the Greek Church, on the spot where the first Christian monarch erected a temple to the true faith of the Apostles. We are no advocates of that Church, with its idolatrous worship and pantomimic ceremonials, fit only to delude the most degraded and ignorant minds; but we answer—put into a people's hands the Bible in lieu of the Koran—let the religion of Mahomet give place to that of Jesus Christ; and human reason, aided by the printing-press and the commerce of the world, will not fail to erase the errors which time, barbarism, or the cunning of its priesthood, may have engrafted upon it.

But to descend from these higher motives to the question of our own interests, to which, probably, as politicians, we ought to confine our consideration.

Nothing, we confess, appears so opposed to the facts of experience, as the belief which has been so industriously propagated in this country, that Russia, if she held the keys of the Dardanelles, would exclude all trade from the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora. The writer so often quoted, says—'On the occupation of the Dardanelles, disappears the importance of our possessions in the Levant. They were only valuable because the Turks held these straits. When Russia is there, they are valueless, and will soon be untenable.' It might be a sufficient reply to these assertions, unsupported by facts or reasoning, to demand of what use will these maritime possessions be to Russia, or any other power, unless for the purposes of trade? Why did the government of St. Petersburg, for nearly a century, bend a steady and longing eye on the ports of the Euxine, but for the facilities which the possession

of one of them would give to the traffic between the interior provinces of Russia and the Mediterranean?

We write, however, with no motive but to disabuse the public mind on an important question; and as we prefer in all cases to appeal to facts, we shall here give a few particulars of the rise and progress of the only commercial port of consequence as yet established in the Black Sea.

The first stone of the town of Odessa was laid, by order of Catherine, in 1792.

Previously to this, the Euxine was so little visited by our mariners, that every kind of absurd story was advanced and credited respecting the danger of its navigation; the very name was held to be only synonymous with the black and dismal character of its storms, or the perilous mists that it was imagined constantly shrouded its surface. The Danube was, in a like spirit of credulity, suspected to pour from its channel so vast a deposit of mud as to fill the Black Sea with shoals, that threatened, in the course of a few ages, to convert its waters into dry land; whilst this river, the noblest in Europe, sealed by Turkish jealousy, thus blotting out, as it were, from commercial existence, that vast pastoral district through which it flowed—this stream, whose course lay almost in the centre of Christendom, was as little known as the great yellow river of China.

Foundation and growth of Odessa.

Odessa has fully equalled the rapid commercial rise of St. Petersburg, to which only in importance it is now the second in the Russian empire. These two ports, which we are taught to believe belong to the most anti-commercial people, present, singularly enough, the two most astonishing instances in Europe of quick advances in wealth, trade, and population.

The population of Odessa is estimated at 40,000 souls. The exportation of tallow has increased in two years twenty-fold; thus civilizing and enriching extensive districts which must have remained in comparative barbarism, had not this outlet been found for their produce. During the same time,

the breed of sheep has been much improved in these vast southern regions of the Russian territory, by the introduction of the merinoes; and the consequent increase of the export of wool has been very considerable.

The amount of imports is stated at 30,000,000 roubles.

We subjoin a statement of the movement of Russian and British shipping at this port, to show that here, as at St. Petersburg and elsewhere, the commerce of England finds a proportionate extension with the trade of other countries.

SHIPPING AT ODESSA.[1]

Vessels.	1826.		1827.		1828.		1829.		1830.		1831.	
	Arrived.	Sailed.	Arrived.	Sailed.	Arrived.	Sailed.	Arrived.	Sailed.	Arrived.	Sailed.	Arrived.	Sailed.
Russian . .	164	111	167	122	50	38	24	38	172	194	155	136
British . .	104	105	155	143	4	8	65	43	147	169	81	83

This town has latterly been declared a free port, with exemption from taxes; and, therefore, we cannot but anticipate for it a much more rapid career in the time to come.

Already have its merchants appeared as our customers on the Exchange of Manchester; and it only requires that we remove our suicidal restrictions on the import of corn, to

[1] M'Culloch's *Dictionary*, p. 858: a work of unrivalled labour and usefulness, which ought to have a place in the library of every merchant or reader who feels interested in the commerce and statistics of the world. We will quote from another part of this valuable work, the opinion of the author upon the influences of Russian sway in this quarter:—'On the whole, however, a gradual improvement is taking place; and whatever objections may, on other grounds, be made to the encroachments of Russia in this quarter, there can be no doubt that, by introducing comparative security and good order into the countries under her authority, she has materially improved their condition, and accelerated their progress to a more advanced state.'—P. 1108.

render Odessa ultimately one of the chief contributors to the trade of Liverpool.

The influence of Russia, since she has gained a settlement on the shores of the Euxine, has been successfully exercised in throwing open the navigation of its waters, with those of the Danube, to the world; and this noble river has at length been subjected to the dominion of steam, which will, beyond all other agents, tend most rapidly to bring the population of its banks within the pale of civilization. A Danube Steam Navigation Joint Stock Company has been projected, and will, in all probability, be in operation next summer: and, as this will give the route from the west of Europe to Turkey, by the way of Vienna, the preference, there is no reason to doubt that eventually this river will enjoy a considerable traffic both of passengers and merchandise.

We have probably said sufficient to prove, from facts, that Russia is not an anti-commercial nation.

We have endeavoured likewise to show that alarms for the safety of our eastern possessions ought not to induce us to go to war to check a movement three thousand miles removed from their capital; and to those who are inspired with fear for our European commerce, from the aggrandizement of Russia, we have answered by showing that Napoleon, when he had all Europe at his feet, could not diminish our trade eight per cent.

What then remains to be urged in favour of the policy of this Government putting its over-taxed people to the cost of making warlike demonstrations in favour of Turkey? At the moment when we write, a British fleet is wintering in the gulf of Vourla, the cost of which, at a low estimate, probably exceeds two millions, to say nothing of living *material;* and this is put in requisition in behalf of a country with which we carry on a commerce less in annual amount than is turned over by either of two trading concerns that we could name in the city of London!

But we are to await a regeneration of this Mahometan

empire. Our arms, we are told, are not only to defend its territory, but to reorganize or reconstruct the whole Turkish government, and to bestow upon its subjects improved political institutions. Let us hear what the pamphlet before us says upon this subject, and let it be borne in mind that the writer's sentiments have been applauded by some of our influential journals :—

Argument for strict neutrality in regard to Russia and Turkey.

'It is the policy of England which alone can save her : it is therefore no trivial or idle investigation which we have undertaken, since it is her political elements that we have to embody into a new political instrument.'—P. 54. Again—'In the capital, in the meanest villages, in the centre of communications, on the furthest frontiers, a feeling of vague but intense expectation is spread, which will not be satisfied with less *at our hands* than internal reorganization and external independence.'—P. 62. Again —'Unless anticipated by visible intervention on the part of England, which will relieve them from the permanent menace of the occupation of the capital, and which *will impose on the government* (!) the necessity of a change of measures, a catastrophe is inevitable.'—P. 63. And again—'An empire which in extent, in resources, in population, in position, and in individual qualities and courage—in all, in fact, save instruction—is one of the greatest on the face of the earth, is brought to look with ardent expectation for the arrival of a foreign squadron, and a body of auxiliaries in its capital, and to expect from their presence *the reformation of internal abuses* (!) and the restoration of its political independence.'—P. 73.

To protect Turkey against her neighbour, Russia—to defend the Turks against their own government—to force on the latter a constitution, we suppose—to redress all internal grievances in a State where there is no law but despotism! Here, then, in a word, is the '*trifling succour*' (p. 2) which we are called on to render our ancient ally; and if the people of Great Britain desired to add another couple of hundreds of millions to their debt, we think a scheme is discovered by which they may be gratified, without seeking for quarrels in any other quarter.

If such propositions as these are, however, to be received

gravely, it might be suggested to inquire, would Russia, would Austria, remain passive, whilst another power sent her squadrons and her armies from ports a thousand miles distant to take possession of the capital and supersede the government of their adjoining neighbour? Would there be no such thing as Russian or Austrian jealousy of British aggrandizement, and might not our Quixotic labours in behalf of Mahometan regeneration be possibly perplexed by the co-operation of those Powers? These questions present to us the full extent of the dilemma in which we must be placed, if we ever attempt an internal interference with the Ottoman territory. *Without* the consent and assistance of Russia and Austria, we should not be allowed to land an army in that country. We might, it is true, blockade the Dardanelles, and thus at any time annihilate the trade of Constantinople and the Black Sea. But our interests would suffer by such a step; and the object of intermeddling at all is, of course, to benefit, and not destroy our trade. We must, then, if we would remodel Turkey, act in conjunction with Russia, Austria, and France. Would the two former of these powers be likely to lend a very sincere and disinterested co-operation, or must we prepare for a game of intrigues and protocols?

These are the probable consequences of our interposing in the case of Turkey; and, from the danger of which, the only alternative lies in a strict neutrality. We are aware that it would be a novel case for England to remain passive, whilst a struggle was going on between two European powers; and we know, also, that there is a predilection for continental politics amongst the majority of our countrymen, that would render it extremely difficult for any administration to preserve peace under such circumstances. Public opinion must undergo a change; our ministers must no longer be held responsible for the everyday political quarrels all over Europe; nor when an opposition member of Parliament or an opposition journalist,[1]

[1] Extract from a London paper, October 22, 1834: 'As at home, so abroad; the Whigs have failed in all their negotiations, and not one

wishes to assail a foreign secretary, must he be suffered to taunt him with neglect of the honour of Great Britain, if he should prudently abstain from involving her in the dissensions that afflict distant communities.

There is no remedy for this but in the wholesome exercise of the people's opinion in behalf of their own interests. The middle and industrious classes of England can have no interest apart from the preservation of peace. The honours, the fame, the emoluments of war belong not to them; the battle-plain is the harvest-field of the aristocracy, watered with the blood of the people.

The policy of non-intervention.

We know of no means by which a body of members in the reformed House of Commons could so fairly achieve for itself the patriotic title of a national party, as by associating for the common object of deprecating all intervention on our part in continental politics. Such a party might well comprise every representative of our manufacturing and commercial districts, and would, we doubt not, very soon embrace the majority of a powerful House of Commons. At some future election, we may probably see the test of '*no foreign politics*' applied to those who offer to become the representatives of free constituencies. Happy would it have been for us, and well for our posterity, had such a feeling predominated in this country fifty years ago! But although, since the peace, we have profited so little by the

question have they settled, except the passing of a Reform Bill and a Poor Law Bill. The Dutch question is undecided; the French are still at Ancona; Don Carlos is fighting in Spain; Don Miguel and his adherents are preparing for a new conflict in Portugal; Turkey and Egypt are at daggers drawn; Switzerland is quarrelling with her neighbouring states about Italian refugees; Frankfort is occupied by Prussian troops, in violation of the treaty of Vienna; Algiers is being made a large French colony, in violation of the promises made to the contrary by France in 1829 and 1830; ten thousand Polish nobles are still proscribed and wandering in Europe; French gaols are full of political offenders, who, when liberated or acquitted, will begin again to conspire. In one word, nothing is terminated.' It is plain that, if this writer had his will, the Whigs would leave nothing in the world for Providence to attend to.

bitter experience of the revolutionary wars as to seek a participation in all the subsequent continental squabbles, and though we are bound by treaties, or involved in guarantees, with almost every State of Europe; still the coming moment is only the more proper for adopting the true path of national policy, which always lies open to us.

We say the coming moment is only the more fit for withdrawing ourselves from foreign politics; and surely there are signs in Europe that fully justify the sentiment. With France, still in the throes of her last revolution, containing a generation of young and ardent spirits, without the resources of commerce, and therefore burning for the excitement and employment of war; with Germany, Prussia, Hungary, Austria, and Italy, all dependent for tranquillity upon the fragile bond of attachment of their subjects to a couple of aged paternal monarchs; with Holland and Belgium, each sword in hand; and with Turkey, not so much yielding to the pressure of Russia, as sinking beneath an inevitable religious and political destiny; surely, with such elements of discord as these fermenting all over Europe, it becomes more than ever our duty to take natural shelter from a storm, from entering into which we could hope for no benefits, but might justly dread renewed sacrifices.

England can do more for freedom by peace than by war.

Nor do we think it would tend less to promote the ulterior benefit of our continental neighbours than our own, were Great Britain to refrain from participating in the conflicts that may arise around her. An onward movement of constitutional liberty must continue to be made by the less advanced nations of Europe, so long as one of its greatest families holds out the example of liberal and enlightened freedom. England, by calmly directing her undivided energies to the purifying of her own internal institutions, to the emancipation of her commerce —above all, to the unfettering of her press from its excise bonds—would, by thus serving as it were for the beacon of other nations, aid more effectually the cause of political

progression all over the continent, than she could possibly do by plunging herself into the strife of European wars.

For, let it never be forgotten, that it is not by means of war that States are rendered fit for the enjoyment of constitutional freedom; on the contrary, whilst terror and bloodshed reign in the land, involving men's minds in the extremities of hopes and fears, there can be no process of thought, no education going on, by which alone can a people be prepared for the enjoyment of rational liberty. Hence, after a struggle of twenty years, *begun in behalf of freedom*, no sooner had the wars of the French revolution terminated, than all the nations of the continent fell back again into their previous state of political servitude, and from which they have, ever since the peace, been *qualifying* to rescue themselves, by the gradual process of intellectual advancement. Those who, from an eager desire to aid civilization, wish that Great Britain should interpose in the dissensions of neighbouring States, would do wisely to study, in the history of their own country, how well a people can, by the force and virtue of native elements, and without external assistance of any kind, work out their own political regeneration; they might learn too, by their own annals, that it is only when at peace with other States that a nation finds the leisure for looking within itself, and discovering the means to accomplish great domestic ameliorations.

To those generous spirits we would urge, that, in the present day, commerce is the grand panacea, which, like a beneficent medical discovery, will serve to inoculate with the healthy and saving taste for civilization all the nations of the world. Not a bale of merchandise leaves our shores, but it bears the seeds of intelligence and fruitful thought to the members of some less enlightened community; not a merchant visits our seats of manufacturing industry, but he returns to his own country the missionary of freedom, peace, and good government—whilst our steamboats, that now visit every port of Europe, and our miraculous railroads, that are the talk of all nations, are the

advertisements and vouchers for the value of our enlightened institutions.

In closing this part of our task, we shall only add, that, whatever other plea may in future be allowed to induce us to embark in a continental conflict, we trust we have proved, that so far as our commerce is concerned, it can neither be sustained nor greatly injured abroad by force or violence. The foreign customers who visit our markets are not brought hither through fears of the power or the influence of British diplomatists: they are not captured by our fleets and armies: and as little are they attracted by feelings of love for us; for that 'there is no friendship in trade,' is a maxim equally applicable to nations and to individuals. It is solely from the promptings of self-interest, that the merchants of Europe, as of the rest of the world, send their ships to our ports to be freighted with the products of our labour. The self-same impulse drew all nations, at different periods of history, to Tyre, to Venice, and to Amsterdam; and if, in the revolution of time and events, a country should be found (which is probable) whose cottons and woollens shall be cheaper than those of England and the rest of the world, then to that spot—even should it, by supposition, be buried in the remotest nook of the globe—will all the traders of the earth flock; and no human power, no fleets or armies, will prevent Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds from sharing the fate of their once proud predecessors in Holland, Italy, and Phœnicia.[1]

[1] Lest it might be said that we are advocating Russian objects of ambition, we think it necessary to observe, that we trust the entire spirit of this pamphlet will show that we are not of *Russian politics*. Our sole aim is the *just interests* of England, regardless of the objects of other nations.

ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND AMERICA

II.—IRELAND

Whilst, within the last twenty years, our sympathies have gone forth over the whole of Europe, in quest of nations' suffering from, or rising up against the injustice of their rulers; whilst Italy, Greece, Spain, France, Portugal, Turkey, Belgium, and Poland, have successively filled the newspapers with tales of their domestic wrongs; and whilst our diplomatists, fleets, and armies have been put in motion at enormous cost, to carry our counsel, or, if needful, our arms, to the assistance of the people of these remote regions: it is an unquestionable fact, that the population of a great portion of our own empire has, at the same time, presented a grosser spectacle of moral and physical debasement than is to be met with in the whole civilized world.

Depressed fate of Ireland compared with its natural resources.

If an intelligent foreigner, after having travelled through England, Scotland, and Wales, and enjoyed the exhibition of wealth, industry, and happiness, afforded everywhere by the population of these realms, were, when upon the eve of departing for the shores of Ireland, to be warned of the scenes of wretchedness and want that awaited him in that country, he would naturally assume the cause in some such question as this:—'The people are no doubt indolent, and destitute of the energy that belongs to the English character?' If it were answered, that, so far from such being the case, the Irish are the hardiest labourers on earth; that the docks and canals of England, and the railroads of America, are the produce of their

toil; in short, that they are the hewers of wood and drawers of water for other nations—then the next inquiry from this stranger would probably be in some such form as this:—'But their soil no doubt is barren, and their climate inhospitable: nature has, besides, probably denied to them the rivers and harbours which are essential to commerce?' What would be his surprise to be answered, that, in natural fertility, and in the advantages of navigable streams, lakes, and harbours, Ireland is more favoured than England, Scotland, or Wales.[1]

Where, then, shall we seek for the causes of the poverty and barbarism that afflict this land? How shall we be able to account for the fact, that commerce and civilization, which have, from the earliest ages, journeyed westward, and in their course have even stayed to enrich the marshes of the Adriatic and the fens of Holland, should have passed over, in their rapid flight to the New World, a spot more calculated by nature than almost any besides, to be the seat of a great internal and external trade?

We do not profess to be able to disclose all the precise causes of the depressed fate of Ireland; still less do we pretend to offer a panacea for all the ills that afflict her. Our object in introducing the subject here is, to show the absurdity and injustice of that policy which leads us to seek amongst other nations for objects of compassion and care, and to neglect the urgent demands that are made upon us at our very door.

[1] 'And sure it is yet a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under heaven, being stored throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish most abundantly, sprinkled with many very sweet islands and goodly lakes, like inland seas that will carry even shippes upon their waters; adorned with goodly woods, even fit for building of houses and shippes so commodiously, as that, if some princes in the world had them, they would soon hope to be lords of all the seas, of all the world; also full of very good ports and havens opening upon England, as inviting us to come unto them, to see what excellent commodities that country can afford; besides, the soyle itselfe fit to yeeld all kinde of fruit that shall be committed thereunto. And lastly, the heavens most mild and temperate, though somewhat more moist than the parts towards the east.'—Spenser.

The strongest ground of grievance that we have ever heard alleged against us by intelligent Irishmen, unimbued with party feelings, is the total neglect and ignorance of their country that prevail amongst the people of England. To the middle classes of this country, as to an impartial tribunal, untainted by the venom of their political and religious factions, a large portion of the Irish people look for the probable regeneration of their unhappy country. Without this tardy effort of justice at our hands, they will never be able to escape from the vortex of their social distractions. This patriotic party, including so much of the intelligence and industry of Ireland, claim from their fellow-subjects on this side of the Channel (and they have a right to claim it), such a consideration of their country, its population and resources, its history, institutions, and geography—in fact, just such a study of Ireland as shall give them a knowledge of its anomalous physical and moral state.

English ignorance and neglect of Ireland.

It is almóst incredible how little is known of this, one of the largest both in area and population of the four divisions of the kingdom. Let any one of our readers take a person of average intelligence, and ask him which is the finest river in the United Kingdom : he will answer, probably, the Thames, the Humber, or the Severn ; it is ten to one against his naming the Shannon. We will venture to say that there are as many individuals in England conversant with the city of New York and the course of the Hudson, as there are who are acquainted with the topography of Limerick, and the banks of the largest river in the British empire.[1]

The past fate of Ireland, like the present condition of its people, presents to our view an anomaly that has no parallel in the history of nations. During all that period of time which has sufficed to enable the other States in Europe to emerge from barbarism—some to attain their zenith of glory and again decay, others to continue at the summit of prosperity—Ireland

[1] A slip, apparently, for United Kingdom.

has never enjoyed one age of perfect security or peace. She has, consequently, unlike every other nation, no era of literature, commerce, or the arts to boast of; nay, she does not exhibit, in her annals, an instance in which she has put forth in war a combined force to merit even the savage honours of military or naval fame.

Poets have feigned a golden age for this, as for every other country; but it never existed, except in the pages of romance. Ireland never was, at any known period of her history, more tranquil or happy than at this day. She has, from the first, been the incessant prey of discord, bloodshed, and famine.

We, who are fond of digging deep into the foundations of causes, incline to assign, as one reason of the adverse condition of this island, the circumstance of the Romans never having colonized it. That people, by deposing the petty chiefs, and gathering and compressing their septs into one communion—by inoculating the natives with a love of discipline—by depositing amongst them the seeds of the arts, and imparting a taste for civilization—would, probably, have given to them that unity and consistency, as one people, the want of which has been the principal source of all their weakness and misfortune. Had the Romans occupied for three centuries such a country as this, they would perhaps have left it, on their departure from Britain, more advanced, in all respects, than it proved to be in the sixteenth century.

But whatever were the causes of the early degradation of this country, there can be no doubt that England has, during the last two centuries, by discouraging the commerce of Ireland — thus striking at the very root of civilization — rendered herself responsible for much of the barbarism that at the present day afflicts it.

However much the conduct of England towards the sister island, in this particular, may have been dwelt upon for party purposes, it is so bad as scarcely to admit of exaggeration.

The first restrictions put upon the Irish trade, were in the reign of Charles II.; and from that time, down to the era when the United Volunteers of Ireland stepped forward to rescue their country from its oppressors (the only incident, by the way, in the chronicles of Ireland, deserving the name of a really national effort), our policy was directed, incessantly, to the destruction of the foreign trade of that country. Every attempt at manufacturing industry, with one exception, was likewise mercilessly nipped in the bud. Her natural capabilities might, for example, have led the people to the making of glass; it was enacted, that no glass should be allowed to be exported from Ireland, and its importation, except from England, was also prohibited. Her soil, calculated for the pasturing of sheep, would have yielded wool equal to the best English qualities; an absolute prohibition was laid on its exportation, and King William, in addressing the British Parliament, declared that he would 'do everything in his power to discourage the woollen manufacture of Ireland.' Down to the year 1779, we find that the export of woollen goods from that island remained wholly interdicted.

Restrictions upon Irish commerce.

Not only was her commerce with the different ports of Europe fettered by the imposition of restrictions upon every valuable product that could interfere with the prosperity of England; not only was all trade with Asia and the east of Europe excluded by the charters which were granted to the companies of London; but her ports were actually sealed against the trade of the American colonies. Although Ireland presented to the ships of North America the nearest and the noblest havens in Europe, and appeared to be the natural landing-place for the products of the New World, her people were deprived of all benefit—nay, they were actually made to suffer loss and inconvenience from their favoured position; laws were passed, prohibiting the importation of American commodities into Ireland, without first landing them in some port of England or Wales, whilst the export of Irish products

to the colonies, excepting through some British port, was also interdicted.

If we add to this, that a law was enacted, preventing beef or live cattle from being exported to England, some idea may be formed of the commercial policy of this country towards Ireland—a policy savouring more of the mean and sordid tyranny of the individual huckster over his poorer rival, than of any nobler oppression that is wont to characterize the acts of victorious nations.

Need we wonder that, at this moment, the entire foreign commerce of Ireland does not much exceed the trade of one second-rate port of Scotland? [1]

There are those who think the Irish genius is unsuited to that eager and persevering pursuit of business which distinguishes the English people; and they argue that, but for this, the natives of a region in all respects so favourable to commerce, must have triumphed over the obstacles that clogged their industry.

There is, we believe, one cause existing, less connected with the injustice of England, and to which we are about to allude, why Ireland is below us, and other Protestant nations, in the scale of civilization; yet, if we look to the prosperity of her staple manufacture—the only industry that was tolerated by the Government of this country—it warrants the presumption, that, under similar favouring circumstances, her woollens, or, indeed, her cottons, might, equally with her linens, have survived a competition with the fabrics of Great Britain.

But there exists, apart from all intolerant or party feelings on the question, a cause, and we believe a primary one, of the retrograde position, as compared with England and Scotland, in which we find Ireland at the present day, in the circumstance of the Roman Catholic religion being the

[1] Dundee. According to M'Culloch's *Commercial Dictionary*, which Cobden constantly used at this time (cf. p. 27, *note*), the total value of Irish exports in 1834 was £336,000.

faith of its people. Let us not be misunderstood — our business does not lie in polemics, and far be it from us to presume to decide which mode of worship may be most acceptable to the great Author of our being. We wish to speak only of the tendency, which, judging from facts that are before us, this Church has to retard the *secular* prosperity of nations.

Probably there is no country in which the effects of the Catholic and Reformed religions upon the temporal career of communities may be more fairly tested than in Switzerland. Of twenty-two cantons, ten are, in the majority of the population, Catholic; eight, Protestant; and the remaining four are mixed, in nearly equal proportions of Protestants and Catholics. Those cantons in which the Catholic faith prevails are wholly pastoral in their pursuits, possessing no commerce or manufacturing industry, beyond the rude products of domestic labour. Of the mixed cantons, three [1] are engaged in the manufacture of cotton; and it is a remarkable feature in the industry of these, that the Catholic portion of their population is wholly addicted to agricultural, and the Protestant section to commercial pursuits. All the eight Protestant cantons are, more or less, engaged in manufactures.

Tendency of Roman Catholic faith to retard secular prosperity.

Nor must we omit to add, which every traveller in Switzerland will have seen, that, in the education of the people, the cleanliness of the towns, the commodiousness of the inns, and the quality of the roads, the Protestant cantons possess a great superiority over their Catholic neighbours—whilst such is the difference in the value of land, that an estate in Friburg, a Catholic canton, possessing a richer soil than that of Berne, from which it is divided only by a rivulet, is worth one-third less than the same extent of property in the latter Protestant district. Such are the circumstances, as we find them in comparing one portion of the Swiss territory with another.

[1] Appenzell, St. Gall, and Aargau.

The facts are still more striking if we view them in relation to the States immediately around them.

Switzerland, being an inland district, far removed from the sea, is compelled to resort to Havre, Genoa, or Frankfort, for the supply of the raw materials of her industry; which are transported by land, three, four, or five hundred miles, *through Catholic States*, for the purpose of fabrication; and the goods are afterwards reconveyed to the same ports for exportation to America or the Levant; where, notwithstanding this heavy expense of transit, and although Switzerland possesses no mineral advantages, they sustain a prosperous competition with their more favoured, but less industrious neighbours and rivals.

If we refer to France, we shall find that a large *depôt* of manufacturing industry has been formed upon the extreme inland frontier of her territory on the Rhine, where her best cottons are fabricated and printed, and conveyed to the metropolis, about three hundred miles off, for sale. Alsace, the Protestant district we allude to, contains no local advantages, no iron or coals; it is upwards of four hundred miles distant from the port through which the raw materials of its manufactures are obtained, and from whence they are conveyed, entirely by land, passing through Paris, to which city the goods are destined to be again returned. Thus are these commodities transported, over-land, more than seven hundred miles, for no other assignable reason, except that they may be subjected to the labour of Protestant hands.

Germany gives us additional facts to the same purport. If we divide this empire into north and south, we shall find the former, containing Prussia, Saxony, etc., to be chiefly Protestant, and to comprise nearly all the manufacturing and commercial interests of the country; whilst the latter are principally Catholic, and almost wholly addicted to agriculture. Education, likewise, follows the same law here as in Switzerland; for, whilst the Catholics amount to about twenty millions, and possess but five universities, the Protestants support thirteen, with only a population of fourteen millions.

If we turn to Catholic Italy, where there is very little manufacturing of any kind, we yet find that the commerce of the country is principally in the hands of foreigners. The merchants of Genoa, Naples, Trieste, etc., are chiefly British, Swiss, or Germans, whose houses, again, have their own agents in the principal interior cities; so that the trade of the Italian States is in great part transacted by Protestants. We need scarcely add to these statements the fact, which all are acquainted with, that, in Ireland, the staple manufacture is almost wholly confined to the Protestant province.

We shall probably be reminded of the former commercial grandeur of Spain and the Italian republics. This was, however, to a great extent the effect of monopolies, which must, from their nature, be of transient benefit to nations; and, moreover, they flourished prior to the complete triumph of the Reformation; and our object is merely to exhibit a comparison between Protestant and Catholic communities of the same period. Besides, Spain and Italy have left no evidences of the enlightened industry of their people; such as are to be seen, for example, to attest the energy of the Dutch, in the canals and dykes of Holland.

We have thus briefly glanced at the comparative conditions of the Catholic and Protestant interests in Europe; and disclaiming, as we do, any theological purpose, we trust we may demand for our argument what is not often accorded to this invidious topic, the candid attention of our readers. The above facts, then, go far to prove that, in human affairs at least, the Reformed faith conduces more than Catholicism to the prosperity of nations.

We shall not argue that the welfare of States, any more than of individuals, afford proofs of spiritual superiority; we will admit that it does not; but, if it can be proved from facts (as we think even our intelligent and ingenious Roman Catholic readers will agree we have done), that the Protestant is, more than the Catholic faith, conducive to the growth of national riches and intelligence, then there must be acknow-

ledged to exist a cause, independent of misgovernment, for the present state of Ireland, as compared with that of Great Britain, for which England cannot be held altogether responsible.

The deficient education of a people is, no doubt, a circumstance that must tend, in these days, when the physical sciences and the arts are so intimately blended with manufacturing industry, and when commerce itself has become a branch of philosophy, to keep them in the rear rank of civilized nations; but we think the abhorrence of change that characterizes Catholic States, and which we shall find not merely to affect religious observances, but to pervade all the habits of social life, has even a more powerful influence over their destinies.

In proof of this, if we take the pages of Cervantes and Le Sage, and compare the portraits and scenes they have depicted, with the characters, costumes, and customs of the present day, we shall find that the Spanish people are, after the lapse of so many ages, in even the minutest observances, wholly unchanged. On the other hand, if we look into Shakespeare, or examine the canvas of Teniers, we shall find that, during the same interval of time, the populations of Holland and England have been revolutionized in all the modes of life, so as scarcely to leave one national feature of those ages for recognition in our day.

Ireland like Spain tenaciously unprogressive.

Ireland has clung tenaciously to her characteristics of ancient days.

'There is a great use among the Irish,' says Spenser, writing more than two hundred years ago, 'to make great assemblies together upon a rath or hill, there to parley, as they say, about matters and wrongs between township and township, or one private person and another.'[1] Now, no person could, by possibility, pass six months in the south of Ireland, during the present year, but he would be certain to witness some gatherings of this nature. But who, that has

[1] Vol. viii. p. 399.

travelled in that island, can have failed to be struck with that universal feature in the dress of the people—the greatcoat? 'He maketh his mantle,' says Spenser, speaking of the Irish peasant of his time, 'his house; and under it covereth himself from the wrath of heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of men. When it raineth it is his pent-house; when it bloweth, it is his tent; when it freezeth, it is his tabernacle. In summer, he can wear it loose; in winter, he can wrap it close; at all times, he can use it; never heavy, never cumbersome.'[1] We have ourselves seen the Irish of our own day, in the midst of winter, wrapping the mantle close, and we have seen them spreading it loosely in summer; we have seen the peasant, whilst at plough, obliged to quit one of the stilts every minute for the purpose of adjusting the greatcoat that was tucked clumsily round his loins; and we have beheld the labourer at work, with his mantle thrown inconveniently over his arms and shoulders; but we have never witnessed it thrown aside. In truth, it is still the mantle that 'hides him from the sight of men;' for, like charity, it cloaks a multitude of defects in the garments beneath.

But it is not in mere externals that we shall find the character of Irish society unchanged. In the manifestations of the passions, in the vehement displays of natural feeling, there is, amidst the general amelioration of the surrounding world, alas! no improvement here. To quote again from the pages of Spenser, an eye-witness:—'I saw an old woman, which was his foster-mother, take up his head, whilst he was quartered, and sucked up all the bloode that runne thereoute, saying, that the earthe was not worthy to drinke it; and, therewith, also steeped her face and breast, and tore her hair crying out and shrieking most terribly.'[2]

Let us compare the above scene, which was enacted at the execution of one of the turbulent natives of the sixteenth century, with the following incident that occurred at the late Rathcormac tithe tragedy:—

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 367.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

'I went up to inspect the haggart where the carnage occurred, and so awful a spectacle I never witnessed; the straw, all saturated with human gore, so that blood oozed through on the pressure of the foot; and, shocking to relate, the widow Collins was seen to kiss the blood of her sons, imprecating God's vengeance on the murderers of her children.'—*Dublin Evening Post*, Dec. 23, 1834.

Who would imagine that more than two centuries have elapsed between the dates when these parallel occurrences took place in one and the same country?

Viewing, as we confessedly do, the Roman Catholic religion to be a great operating cause against the amelioration of the state of Ireland, it becomes an interesting question, how it happens that we find its dogmas to be professed with so much zeal at the present day in that country. How does it arise, that whereas, during the last three centuries, history exhibits nation after nation yielding up its religion to those reforms which time had rendered necessary, until nearly the whole of northern and western Europe has become Protestant—Ireland, notwithstanding so much contiguous change, still clings, with greater devotion than ever, to the shattered tiara of Rome? That such is the case is proved by the evidence of a trustworthy author, whose recent travels in Ireland we shall have occasion to allude to.[1]

Causes of the strength of Rome in Ireland.

We fervently believe that persecution—perhaps honestly devised, but still persecution—has done for this Church what, under the circumstances, nothing besides could have achieved: it has enabled it to resist, not only unscathed, but actually with augmented power, the shocks of a free press, and the

[1] 'In no country is there more bigotry and superstition among the lower orders, or more blind obedience to the priesthood; in no country is there so much intolerance and zeal among the ministers of religion. I do believe, that at this moment Catholic Ireland is more rife for the re-establishment of the Inquisition than any other country in Europe.'—Inglis' *Travels in Ireland*. See the same traveller's description of Patrick's Purgatory, Loch Dergh. It adds weight to the testimony of this writer upon such a subject, when it is recollected that he is the author of *Travels in Spain*.

liberalizing influence of the freest constitutional government in Europe.

We shall be told that the epithet persecution no longer applies, since all civil disabilities are removed from our Catholic fellow-subjects; but, we ask, does it not still apply as much in principle, though not in degree, to the present condition of the Irish Church—where six millions of Catholics are forced to see the whole tithe of their soil possessed by the clergy of one million of Protestants—as it did to the persecutions of the ancient martyrs, or to the *autos-de-fé* of modern Spain? Is not the spirit of persecution the same, but modified to meet the spirit of the age?

If we would bring this case home to our own feelings, let us suppose that the arms of the United States of America were to achieve the conquest of Great Britain; we will further suppose that that country possessed an established Church, differing in faith from our own—for instance, let it be imagined to be of the Unitarian creed. Now, then, we put it to the feelings of our countrymen, would they, or would they not, regard it as persecution, if they saw the whole of the tithes of England diverted from their present uses, to be applied to the support of a faith which they abhorred? Would it not be felt as persecution to be compelled, not only to behold their cathedrals and churches in the hands of the ministers of a (by them) detested creed, but the lands and revenues which appertain to them, wrested from their present purposes, by the force of a government on the other side of the ocean? And, seeing these things, would it not be felt and suffered as persecution, if the people of England, still clinging to a man to their national Church, were impelled by conscience to erect other temples of worship, and out of their own pockets to maintain their ejected and despised ministers?

But, to come to the still more important question, we appeal to the breasts of our readers, would they, under such circumstances, be likely to become converts to the religion of their spoilers and oppressors; or, would they not, more

probably, nourish such a spirit of resentment and indignation as would render impossible a calm or impartial examination of its dogmas? And would not their children and their children's children be taught to abhor, even before they could understand, the very name of Unitarianism? But, pursuing our hypothesis, supposing all this to occur in England, and that the nation were compelled, by the presence of a sufficient army, to submit —what would the probable effects of such a state of things be upon the peace and prosperity of the community? However excellent might be the laws and institutions, however liberal and enlightened the policy, in other respects, of the government set over us by the Americans, whatever commercial advantages might be derived from a complete incorporation with the United States—would the people, the church-loving people of those realms be found to be quietly and successfully pursuing their worldly callings, forgetting the grievances of their consciences? We hope not! For the honour of our countrymen we fervently believe that all worldly pursuits and interests would be, by them, and their sons, and their sons' sons, even down to the tenth generation, abandoned; that agitation would be rife in the land, and that every county in England would put forth its O'Connell, wielding the terrible energies of combined freemen, until the time that saw such monstrous tyranny abated!

Persecution may be, as it often has been, the buttress of error; but all history proves that it can never aid the cause of truth.

What has preserved the Jews a distinct people, scattered as they have been amidst all the nations of the earth? No miracle, certainly; for they are now dissolving into the ranks of Christians before the sun of American toleration;[1] and our country, but especially the spot where we write, gives us a

[1] In the United States a Jew can hold all offices of state; he may by law become the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chief Justice, or even President. An American naval commander of the Hebrew faith was, upon one occasion, introduced to George IV.

similar beneficent example in comparison with other States. Nothing more than the universal and unintermitted series of oppressions that characterized the conduct of every Government towards that despised people, from the destruction of Jerusalem down to the last century, can be necessary to account for the fact, that the Hebrew people exceed, perhaps, at this moment, in numbers, the population of Judæa, at the most flourishing period of its history. Nor, if it were desired, during the eighteen centuries to come, to preserve the Jews a separate people, could the wit or the philosophy of man devise a scheme to prevent their amalgamating with the nations of the earth, other than by persevering in the same infallible course of persecution.

Let them search the annals of religious persecution (and it is the most humiliating chapter in the history of poor human nature), and we will challenge the advocates of coercive dealings in matters of conscience, to produce an instance where violence, bribery, or secular power in any form, has ever aided the cause of true religion. To the honour of the immaterial portion of our being, although the body may be made to yield to these influences, the soul, disdaining all mortal fetters, owes no allegiance but to itself and its Maker.

So long then as the Church of England possesses the whole of the religious revenue of Ireland, there cannot be—nay, judging of the case as our own there ought not to be—peace or prosperity for its people; and what is of still more vital importance, there can be, judging by the same rule, no chance of the dissemination of religious truth in that country.

Let us not be met by those unthinking persons who view tithes as religion, with the cry about the destruction of the Protestant Church. We are of that Church, and we reckon it amongst the happiest circumstances of our destiny that Providence has placed us in a Protestant land. In our opinion—and we have endeavoured to prove it from the homely but incontrovertible arguments of facts—no greater temporal misfortune can attach to a people of the

Irish tithe question.

present age than to profess the Roman Catholic religion : and it is in order to give the Irish an opportunity of considering with that *indifferency* which we believe with Locke is the indispensable prelude to the successful search after truth, the doctrines of our reformed faith, that we would do them the justice in the first place of putting them on a perfectly equal footing, as respects matters of conscience with their Protestant fellow-subjects.

We are not visionary enough to shut our eyes to the vast impediments in the way of such a consummation as we have jumped to. These, however, do not in the least affect the question as to its justice or expediency. The obstacles lie in the House of Peers, and probably in the breast of the King. If the conscience of the latter should be affected with scruples as to the binding nature of the coronation oath, precautions might be taken to prevent a similar future obstacle on the demise of the crown. With respect to the House of Lords, difficulties of a less august nature will have to be encountered; for why should the fact be concealed that the church question in whichever way agitated is one that concerns the *interests* of the aristocracy? Hence is the difficulty: that whereas we sincerely believe if a canvass were made from house to house throughout Great Britain, four-fifths of the middle classes of its people would be found at once not interested in the temporalities of the Irish Church, and willing to grant to their Catholic fellow-subjects of Ireland, a complete equality of religious privileges; on the contrary, if an appeal were to be made to the votes of the House of Peers, four-fifths of that assembly would very likely oppose such a measure of justice and peace; and probably that great majority of its members would be found to be immediately or remotely interested in the revenues of that Church.

We would recommend the most ample concessions to be made to countervail the obstacles of self-interest. There is no present sacrifice of a pecuniary nature that will not be an ultimate gain to the middle and working-classes of England, if it only tend to pacify and regenerate Ireland.

Viewing the subject as a question of pounds, shillings, and pence (and it partakes a great deal more of that character than folks are aware of), the people of England would be gainers by charging the whole amount of the church revenue of Ireland to the consolidated fund, if by so doing they were only to escape the expense of supporting an enormous army [1] for the service of that country.

Cost of English garrison.

But we are from another motive of self-interest far more deeply concerned in the tranquillity and improvement of the sister kingdom: for it ought to be borne in view and impressed upon the minds of the industrious classes of this country, that unless we can succeed in laying the foundations of some plan for elevating the people of Ireland to an equality with us, they will inevitably depress us to a level with themselves. *There cannot permanently be in a free community two distinct castes or conditions of existence, such as are now to be found in this united empire.* Already is the process of assimilation going on; and the town in which we write furnishes amongst others a striking example of the way in which the contagion of Irish habits is contaminating whilst the

Ireland in England.

[1] STATIONS OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN IRELAND, ON THE 1ST NOVEMBER, 1834 (from the *United Service Journal*). Those marked thus * are depôts of Regiments. 3rd Dragoon Guards, Dublin; 4th Dragoon Guards, Cork; 7th do., Limerick; 9th Lancers, Newbridge; 10th Hussars, Dundalk; 14th Light Dragoons, Longford; 15th Hussars, Dublin; 3rd batt. Grenadier Guards, Dublin; 1st Foot, 1st batt. Londonderry;* 2nd batt. Athlone; 7th, Drogheda;* 9th, Youghal;* 14th, Mullingar; 18th, Limerick; 24th, Kinsale;* 25th, Armagh;* 27th, Dublin; 29th, Kinsale;* 30th, Clonmel;* 43rd, Cork; 46th, Dublin; 47th, Boyle;* 52nd, Enniskillen; 56th, Cork;* 60th, Nenagh; 2nd batt. Kilkenny; 67th, Cashel;* 69th, Clare Castle;* 70th, Cork;* 74th, Belfast; 76th, Boyle;* 81st, Dublin; 82nd, Belfast; 83rd, Newry; 85th, Galway; 89th, Fermoy; 90th, Naas; 91st, Birr; 94th, Cork; 95th, Templemore; 69th, Kinsale.

Here is an array of bayonets that renders it difficult to believe that Ireland is other than a recently conquered territory, throughout which an enemy's army has just distributed its encampments. Four times as many soldiers as comprise the standing army of the United States are at this time quartered in Ireland!

competition of that people is depressing the working classes of Britain.

Manchester is supposed to contain fifty thousand Irish, or the immediate descendants of Irish. The quarter in which they congregate is like the district of St. Giles' of London, a nursery of all the customs that belong to savage life. In the very centre of our otherwise civilized and wealthy town, a colony which has acquired for its *locale* the title of Little Ireland, exhibits all the filth, depravity, and barbarism that disgrace its patronymic land. Nor is the evil confined within such limits. Its influences are felt in the adulteration of character, and the lowering of the standard of living of our artisans generally: it is a moral cancer that in spite of the efforts of science or philanthropy to arrest its progress, continues to spread throughout the entire mass of our labouring population.

No part of England or Scotland is exempt from its share in the natural consequences of this terrible state of degradation to which the people of Ireland are reduced. There is not a village or parish of the kingdom into which its famine-impelled natives do not, at certain periods of the year, penetrate to share the scanty wages of our peasantry; thus dragging them down to their own level, and, in return, imparting to them the sad secrets of their own depraved modes of life.

But great as this evil has hitherto been, it is only a subject of astonishment to us, that the immigration of the Irish people into this portion of the empire has not been more extensive: sure we are, from the accounts we have of the present state of the southern portion of that island, that nothing short of Berkeley's wall of brass can, for the future, save us from an overwhelming influx of its natives.

Let those who are incredulous of our opinion, consult the recent work on Ireland, from which we are about to offer an extract or two for the perusal of our readers.

We look upon every writer who directs the attention of the people of England to the *facts* connected with the present state of Ireland, as a benefactor of his country. Even should

an author, for the sake of being read, or for party purposes, like Cobbett, throw some exaggeration into his pictures of the horrors of this land, we still view him in the useful capacity of a watchman, sounding the alarm of danger, scarcely too loud, to the indifferent minds of Great Britain. Though, like the hydro-oxygen microscope, when applied to physical objects, his descriptions magnify its social monsters, till their magnitude terrifies the beholder—still the monsters are there: they are only enlarged, and not created. In the purer elements of English society, such evils could not, through whatever exaggerating medium, be discovered.

But the traveller from whom we are about to quote, gives intrinsic evidences of not only competent intelligence, but strict impartiality, and a sincere love of truth. We do not think that he possesses, in an eminent degree, the organ of causality, as the phrenologists call it; for he attributes, as the ultimate cause of the miseries of Ireland, the want of employment for its people; not recollecting that this evil must have its cause: but in the qualities of a careful and experienced observer of facts, he is, unquestionably, a competent authority. These are his words, in speaking of the remuneration of labour in Ireland:—'I am quite confident, that, if the whole yearly earnings of the labourers of Ireland were divided by the whole number of labourers, the result would be under this sum—fourpence a-day for the labourers of Ireland.' Again, in speaking of the habitations of the peasantry of Ireland, the following is the description given by the same author:—

The state of the Irish peasantry.

'The only difference between the best and the worst of the mud cabins is, that some are water-tight, and some are not; air-tight, I saw none; with windows, scarcely any; with chimneys—that is, with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape through—as many perhaps with it as without it. As for furniture, there is no such thing; unless a broken stool or two, and an iron pot, can be called furniture. I should say that, in the greater part of Leinster and Munster, and in the flat districts of Connaught, bedsteads are far from general, and bed-clothing is never sufficient.'

Let us reflect for a moment on what would be the effects upon the condition of our industrious population, if they were brought down to share one common average with these labourers; a fate which, we repeat, they are doomed to suffer; unless, by imparting peace and prosperity to Ireland, we shall succeed in elevating her people to our own level.

This intelligent traveller sums up his recital of all that he witnessed during a tour of many months throughout the island (great part of which time he spent in unrestrained intercourse with the peasantry) in these words, which, along with every other portion of his volumes, do equal honour to his moral courage and philanthropy:—

'I, Henry David Inglis, acting under no superior orders; holding no government commission; with no end to serve, and no party to please; hoping for no patronage, and fearing no censure; and with no other view than the establishment of truth—having just completed a journey throughout Ireland, and having minutely examined, and inquired into the condition of the people of that country—do humbly report, that the destitute, infirm, and aged, form a large body of the population of the cities, towns, and villages of Ireland: that, in the judgment of those best qualified to know the truth, three-fourth parts of their number die through the effects of destitution, either by the decay of nature accelerated, or through disease induced by scanty and unwholesome food, or else by the attacks of epidemics, rendered more fatal from the same causes: that the present condition of this large class is shocking for humanity to contemplate, and beyond the efforts of private beneficence to relieve, and is a reproach to any civilized and Christian country.'

A Christian country, does he say? Posterity will doubt it! There is no such picture as this of a permanent state of national existence to be found in any authentic history, ancient or modern, Christian or Pagan. We shall search the volumes of the most accredited travellers in Russia,[1] Turkey,[2]

[1] Dr. Clarke tells us that the serfs of Russia, when old, are, of right, supported by the owners of the estate.

[2] In the Koran, the charities are enjoined: and Tournefort tells us—'There are no beggars to be seen in Turkey, because they take care to

or India, and find no description of a people that is not enviable, in comparison with the state of millions of our fellow-subjects in Ireland. The natives of Moldavia and Wallachia, which provinces have been the battle-field for Turks and Christians for centuries, are now living in happiness and plenty, when compared with the fate of the inhabitants of a country that has known no other invader but England.

We lavish our sympathies upon the serfs of Poland, and the slaves of Turkey; but who would not prefer to be one of these, to the perishing with hunger under the name of freeman? We send forth our missionaries to convert the heathen; but well might the followers of Mahomet or Zoroaster instruct us in the ways of charity to our poor Christian brethren! Far be it from us to say, with a celebrated French writer, that we distrust the philanthropy of all those who seek in distant regions for objects of their charity; but we put it to our countrymen, whether, in lending themselves to any scheme, having benevolence for remote nations in view, whilst such a case as this stands appealing at their doors, they are not, in the emphatic words of Scripture, 'taking the children's meat and casting it to the dogs.'

We shall be told that the hundreds of thousands of pounds that are sent annually to remote regions are for the promotion of religion. But there cannot be religion where there is not morality; and can morals survive in a starving community such as exists in Ireland? No! and therefore we say, until the above proclamation of her desperate sufferings be controverted (and who will gainsay it?), a copy of it ought to be

prevent the unfortunate from falling into such necessities. They visit the prisons to discharge those who are arrested for debt; they are very careful to relieve persons who are bashfully ashamed of their poverty. How many families may one find who have been ruined by fires, and are restored by charities! They need only present themselves at the doors of the mosques. They also go to their houses to comfort the afflicted. The diseased, and they who have the pestilence, are succoured by their neighbour's purse.'—Vol. ii. p. 59. The Bible still more strictly commands charity, and—see Inglis' *Ireland!*

affixed to every public building, and to the doors of every church and chapel in particular of England; and all attempts, of whatever description, to subsidize the charity of this country, in behalf of alien nations, whilst this member of our own family, in the extremity of want, supplicates for succour at our hands, should be denounced and put aside by the common sense and humanity of the nation.

If not, if for more fanciful, because more distant, projects of benevolence, we neglect our obvious duty towards these our fellow-countrymen, then will the sins and omissions of their fathers be visited upon the future generations of Englishmen; for assuredly will the accumulated ills of Ireland recoil upon their heads, until one common measure of suffering shall have been meted out to both!

But we will not forget that our object in entering upon the consideration of this subject, was to illustrate the impolicy and injustice of the statesmen of this country, who have averted their faces from this diseased member of our body-politic; and, at the same time, have led us, thus maimed, into the midst of every conflict that has occurred upon the whole continent of Europe. To give one example, let us only recur to the year 1823, when the French invasion of Spain drew forth those well-known powerful appeals of Brougham to the ever-ready-primed pugnacity of his countrymen, in which he exhausted his eloqnence in the cause of war against France; declaring, amongst similar flights, that we ought to spend our last shilling in behalf of Spanish independence; whilst, at the very same moment of time, famine, pestilence, and insurrection were raging, even to an unparalleled extent, in Ireland, whose natives were driven to subsist on the weeds of the fields, and for whom a subscription fund, amounting to more than a quarter of a million, was that very year raised by the people of Great Britain.

Evil effects at home of a pugnacious foreign policy.

Subsequently, as our readers know, our Government dispatched an armament to the succour of Portugal. We witnessed the departure of those troops from London, and

well do we remember the enthusiasm of the good citizens on that occasion. In the next meeting of Parliament, it was stated that this display of our power and magnanimity towards an old ally cost upwards of a million sterling. Here was a sum that would have sufficed to employ the starving peasantry of Ireland in constructing a railroad fifty miles in length. What fruits have we to exhibit, in the present state of the Peninsula, that can be said to have grown out of this expenditure?

But the worst effects of an intermeddling policy are, that we are induced, at all times, to maintain an *attitude*, as it is termed, sufficiently formidable, in the face of Europe. Thus, the navy—which after the peace was very properly reduced, so that in 1817 it comprised only 13,000 seamen and 6000 marines—was, under the plea of the disturbed state of Europe, from time to time augmented; until, in 1831, the estimate amounted to 22,000 seamen and 10,000 marines: whilst the army, which, in 1817, had been cut down to 69,000 men, was, by successive augmentations, raised to 88,000 in 1831.

Our limits do not allow us to go further into details upon this portion of our task. But we cannot dismiss the subject altogether, without a few observations upon the remedies which are proposed for the present state of Ireland. That 'every quack has his nostrum for the cure of poor Erin,' is a common remark with her people; and although we find the doctors, as usual, differ exceedingly in opinion, there are two prescriptions which have been very numerously recommended—we allude to a law against absenteeism, and a poor-law.

Quack remedies for Ireland.

We should hail any measure that promised the slightest relief to the wretched people of this country. But it is necessary to ask, Could these plans, through any law, be efficaciously enforced? There is, we think, much raving after impracticable legislation nowadays. Let us see if these be not specimens of it. We never yet met with a person who professed to understand how an Act of Parliament could be framed, that, without committing the

most grievous injustice and cruelty, would be more than a dead letter against Irish absenteeism. Let us imagine that a law was enacted to compel every owner of an estate in Ireland to reside upon his property. Well, this would be imprisonment for life. No, is the answer: he might range over the whole island, and even reside on the sea-coast, or, for a portion of the year, in Dublin. Good: then he must have a passport, and at every move his person must be cognized; and for this purpose a police, similar to the French gensdarmerie, must be organized throughout the country. But the traders, the farmers, the professional men, the tourists, the beggars, the commercial travellers, the strangers—all these, we suppose, would be subjected to the like *surveillance?* Oh! no! must be the reply: that would be to obstruct the entire business of the country. Thus this law falls to the ground, since the landowner might elude it under any of these disguises.

But to approach the subject in another way. The enactment would not, of course, be passed without some clauses of exceptions. It would be barbarous, for example, to prohibit a man from changing his abode, if illness demanded it, or if his wife or children were in that extremity. What, then, would be the market price of a doctor's certificate, to transport a *malade imaginaire* to France or Italy? Again, if a Milesian landlord pined for a trip to London, would not a subpœna to attend some law process be a favourite resource? Or a friend might summon him before a parliamentary committee, or find him comfortable apartments in the rules of the Fleet. Fictitious conveyances, nominal divisions of property, and a thousand other expedients, might be named, for rendering nugatory this law, each one of which would, to a reasonable mind, prove the impracticability of such a measure.

Let those who think that a poor's-rate, sufficient to operate as a relief to the pauper population, could be levied in the south of Ireland, peruse Inglis's description of the present state of the province of Connaught. How would the rate be agreed upon, when no one of the wretched farmers would come

forward to fix the amount? Or, if they did agree to a levy who would be bold enough to collect the rate? Who would distribute it, where all are needy of its assistance? But, for the sake of contemplating the probable effects of such a law, let us suppose that these difficulties were got over. We believe that those who recommend a poor's-law as a remedy for Ireland, are imperfectly acquainted with its desperate condition.

The poor's-rate of England had, two years ago, in various districts, reached fourteen shillings in the pound; and, in one instance, it absorbed the entire rental of the land; and this occurred in Buckinghamshire, within fifty miles of London, and where there are rich farmers and landowners.

What, then, would be the effects of any poor-law in a country where parish after parish, throughout vast districts, contains not an inhabitant who tastes better food than potatoes, or knows the luxury of shoes and stockings, or other shelter than a mud cabin? We dread to contemplate the results which, in our judgment, would follow such an attempt to ameliorate the lot of this population. As soon as a competent provision for the poor were ordered—such as a Christian legislature must assign, if it touch the subject at all—the starving peasantry of Ireland, diverted from their present desperate resources of emigration or partial employment in towns, would press upon the occupiers of the soil for subsistence, with such overwhelming claims as to absorb the whole rental in less than six months. What must follow, but that every person owning a head of cattle or a piece of furniture, would fly to the cities; leaving the land to become a scramble to the pauper population, which, in turn, abandoned to its own passions, and restrained by no laws or government, would probably divide itself once more into septs, under separate chieftains (the elements of this savage state are still in existence in many parts of the south of Ireland), and commence a war of extermination with each other. The days of the Pale and all its horrors would be again revived: famine would soon, of necessity, ensue; the towns would be assailed by these barbarous and starving clans; and the British

Government would once more be called on to quell this state of rapine with the sword.

Such, we conscientiously believe, would be the inevitable consequences of a measure which, to the eye of the uninformed or unreflecting philanthropist, appears to be the most eligible plan for the peace and prosperity of Ireland.

What remedies, then, remain for this suffering country?

We shall pass by the cry for the repeal of the Union; because everybody knows that to have been only used as an engine for the purpose of acquiring a power to coerce England into other acts of justice. A Parliament in Dublin would not remedy the ills of Ireland. That has been tried, and found unsuccessful; for all may learn in her history, that a more corrupt, base, and selfish public body than the domestic legislature of Ireland never existed; and the very first declaration of the United Volunteers, when, in 1781, they took the redress of her thousand wrongs into their own hands, was to the effect, that they resolved to use every effort to extirpate the corruptions that so notoriously existed in the Irish Parliament; and one of the first acts of the same patriotic body, was to invest the Parliament House in Dublin, and, at the point of the bayonet, to extort from those native legislators a redress of their country's grievances.

Repeal.

To come, next, to the scheme of emigration. All must regard with feelings of suspicion and disfavour any attempt to expatriate a large body of our fellow-countrymen; and we hold such an antidote to be only like removing the slough which has arisen from a wound, whilst the disease itself remains untouched.

But, unhappily, the maladies of Ireland have taken such deep root, that legislation cannot hope, for ages to come, effectually to eradicate them; whilst here is a mode by which hundreds of thousands of our fellow-creatures are eager to be enabled to escape a lingering death. Surely, under such circumstances, this plan, which would leave us room to administer more effectually to the cure of her

Emigration.

social disorders, deserves the anxious consideration of our legislature.

Here let us demand why some forty or fifty of our frigates and sloops of war, which are now, at a time of peace, sunning themselves in the Archipelago, or anchoring in friendly ports, or rotting in ordinary in our own harbours, should not be employed, by the Government, in conveying these emigrants to Canada, or some other hospitable destination? The expense of transporting an individual from Limerick to the shores of America, by such a method, would, probably, not exceed two pounds. On arrival, the government agents might, probably, find it necessary to be at the charge of his subsistence for a considerable time—perhaps, not less than twelve months.

Altogether, however, the expense of a project of emigration, on a scale of magnitude, must be enormous. But, again we say, that any present sacrifice, on the part of the people of this country, by which the Irish nation can be lifted from its state of degradation, will prove an eventual gain.

Contemporary with any plan of emigration, other projects for the future amelioration of the fate of that miserable people must be entered upon by the British Parliament; and we should strongly advocate any measure of internal improvement, which, by giving more ready access to the southern portion of the island, would throw open its semi-barbarous region to the curiosity and enterprise of England. Steam navigation has already given a powerful stimulus to the industry of the eastern maritime counties; and if, by means of railroads, the same all-powerful agent could be carried into the centre of the kingdom, there can be no doubt that English capital and civilization would follow in its train. Every one conversant with the subject, is aware how greatly the pacification and prosperity of the Scotch Highlands were promoted by carrying roads into these savage districts; and still more recently, how, by means of the steam navigation of the lakes, and the consequent influx of visitors, the people have been enriched and civilized. Similar effects

Steamships and railroads.

would doubtless follow, if the facilities of railroad travelling were offered to Ireland, whose scenery, hardly rivalled in Europe, together with the frank and hilarious temperament of its people, could not fail to become popular and attractive with the English traveller.

We will here introduce a scheme to the notice of our readers, which, whilst we gladly acknowledge with gratitude the source from whence it originated, we think deserves the notice of our Government.

In the *New York Courier and Enquirer* newspaper of December 24th, 1834, appeared a letter headed 'Traverse Atlantic,' which after stating that the writer, on a recent visit to Europe, had suffered a delay of ten days in ascending the French Channel, from Finisterre to Havre, and of eight days in descending the Irish Channel, from Liverpool to Cape Clear, says he 'believes that on an average, one-third or one-fourth of the time is wasted, upon every transatlantic voyage, in getting into, or out of, the European ports now resorted to.' The writer then proceeds as follows :—

'The commerce of America chiefly centres in the ports of Hamburgh, Havre, London, and Liverpool. Each of these is distant from the ocean, and difficult of access. On the western coast of Ireland, there are several harbours far superior in every requisite. As, for instance, the island of Valencia, which is the nearest point of land in Europe to America. Between it and the main, reposes an excellent receptacle for shipping of any burden, approached by two easily practicable inlets, completely landlocked, capacious, and safe. Situated immediately on the brim of the Atlantic, a perfectly straight line can be drawn from this harbour to the port of New York, the intervening transit unobstructed by islands, rocks, or shoals. The distance being less than two thousand seven hundred miles, may be traversed by steam in about eight days ; and the well-known enterprise of the American merchants, renders it unnecessary for me to do more than to intimate that they will avail themselves of every opening or inducement that may arise, to establish the first link of intercourse by a line of packet boats. . . .

'The extent of this undertaking has been stated as beyond the

means of those likely to engage in it. This seems to me incredible, when I advert to the facts, that Ireland has a population of eight millions, multitudes of whom are in beggary for want of work, with wages at from fourpence to one shilling a-day, and money, on the average, not worth more than three per cent.; and recollect, at the same time, that the state of South Carolina, one of the smallest in the American confederation, with a population of three hundred thousand, wages at five shillings sterling a-day, and capital at seven per cent. interest, has, unaided, and by private enterprise, constructed a railroad from Charleston to Augusta, one hundred and forty-five miles in extent, at present the longest in the world, which is travelled by locomotive engines in the course of ten hours.

'The advantages to accrue to Ireland in particular, by thus opening a regular communication from New York to London in twelve, and to Paris in fifteen days, are incalculable. That island would become, of necessity, the thoroughfare between the two hemispheres; and the occupation of the public mind in such an enterprise, and the constantly increasing fruits of its progress, would do more to pacify the fearful dissensions of the people, and ameliorate their most lamentable condition, than any legislation of even the best disposed Parliament.'

The above project, which, in the affluence of their enterprise, our American friends have suggested for the benefit of Ireland, merits the attention of all landowners and patriots concerned for the welfare of her people.

It has long been decided, by the merchants and nautical men engaged in the intercourse between Liverpool and America, that steam boats[1] would be found capable of navigating the Atlantic with perfect safety; and the more sanguine amongst those interested in increasing the facilities of communication between the two countries, have gone so far as to predict that, in a dozen years' time, we may hope to witness the arrival and departure of steamers twice a-week between England and the United States.

As any scheme of this nature must necessarily require that the vessels should take their departure from the nearest points

[1] In June, 1819, a steamship crossed the Atlantic from Savannah to Liverpool.

of approximation of the two hemispheres, Ireland would thus become the starting-place for all Europe; and it is scarcely possible to conceive anything that would be more calculated to enrich and civilize that country, than by thus irrigating it, as it were, with the constant tide of emigration to and from America.[1]

A railway, for the purpose here alluded to, would pass through the centres of Leinster and Munster; intersecting the counties of Kildare, Queen's County, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Limerick, Cork, and Kerry; and would pass within twenty miles of the port of Limerick, and thirty miles from that of Cork, to both of which cities, it might reasonably be expected, that branches would be carried by public subscription; thus, not only would these two great commercial havens be connected with Dublin, but by opening a direct communication with each other, it would afford a medium for traffic, by steam, between the fifteen counties that are washed by that noble stream, the Shannon, and the ports of Cork and Bristol; and, ultimately, by means of the Great Western Railway, with London.

Railroads are already begun for connecting Liverpool with Southampton, by way of Birmingham and London. The French have long been engaged in making surveys for a railway from Havre, by way of Rouen (the Manchester of France) to Paris: and although characteristic delays may arise to retard the completion of this as of other projects of mere usefulness, with that fanciful people; yet, as it is, perhaps the only line in all France that would prove a remunerative speculation, there can be no doubt that it will be the first that is undertaken in that country.

Presuming this to be effected, then, by means of such a plan as is here recommended, for constructing a line from

[1] In 1858, when the Earl of Eglinton was Lord Lieutenant, the first Irish Trans-Atlantic packet station was established at Galway; and about a year later Cork was made a port of call for the Inman steamships, and subsequently for the Cunard line.

Dublin to the extreme point of Munster, a traveller would be enabled to transport himself from the French metropolis, *viâ* Havre, Southampton, London, Liverpool, and Dublin, to Valencia Island, or any other point of embarkation on that coast, in about sixty hours; and, as the voyage to New York would be accomplished in about eleven or twelve days, the whole distance from Paris to America, which now, upon an average, occupies forty days in the passage, would be accomplished by the agency of steam, in about a third of that time.

That such a project, if completed, would secure the preference of voyagers to all parts of North America, not only from Britain, but from every quarter of Europe, must be apparent; that all we have recommended is perfectly practicable, we have no difficulty in believing: and that a traffic, of such magnitude as is here contemplated, would have the effect of imparting wealth and civilization to the country through which it passed, all experience proves to be unquestionable.

But it is not merely the future benefit that must accrue to Ireland, from the construction of a railroad through her provinces, that we should alone regard. The present support of her unemployed peasantry is another cogent motive for some such undertakings: for, unless a diversion of the surplus labour from the land be effected, through the employment of English capital amongst its population, no change can be attempted in the agricultural economy of Ireland. There is not absolutely, in the present densely crowded state of her rural inhabitants, elbow-room, so to speak, sufficient for readjusting their position. Yet there are reforms indispensably requisite to the agricultural prosperity of the island. The farming implements of its people are, for example, notoriously inferior, requiring twice the labour, both of men and cattle, of our own; yet, how shall we hope to see any improvements effected in these, by which the demand for labour shall be temporarily diminished, whilst one half of the peasantry is perishing for want of work?

Agricultural reforms.

Again: the farms are so minutely subdivided, to meet the

desperate competition of a people who possess no resource but the land to preserve them from famine, that their occupiers are destitute altogether of capital, and aim at no other end but to secure a daily subsistence on potatoes.

Under a better system, the cultivation of flax might be extended almost indefinitely. At present, the estimated value of the annual production of this raw material of their staple manufacture is about £1,500,000, which is yielded from one hundred thousand acres of land—not one-tenth of the area of a moderate-sized county.[1] But how can we apply a remedy to these, or the other evils of the soil, amidst a ferocious and lawless community, that visits with fire and sword [2] the prædial reformer?

We confess we see no hope for the eventual prosperity of this country, except in the employment of a portion of its people, through the instrumentality of English capital, in the pursuit of manufactures or commerce. Of capital they are literally more destitute, in some parts of the west coast of the island, than are the North American Indians on the banks of the Mississippi; as an instance in proof of which, it may be stated that, in a recent Government survey of that quarter, a vessel of war was the first to discover some of the finest fishing stations to be found in the British waters; and yet the natives of the neighbouring shores possess not the means of procuring boats or nets, through which to avail themselves of these treasures!

Want of capital due to want of toleration.

Capital, like water, tends continually to a level; and, if any great and unnatural inequality is found to exist in its distribution over the surface of a community, as is the case in this

[1] In 1854 there were 151,403 acres under flax cultivation; and in 1864 about 300,000 acres. The home supply is now (1903) quite inadequate to the demands of the linen industry, and about 100,000 tons of flax are imported annually.

[2] The barbarities committed in Ireland as frequently spring out of feuds arising from the competition after land, as from disputes upon tithes.

United Kingdom, the cause must, in all probability, be sought for in the errors or violence of a mistaken legislation. The dominant Church, *opposed to the national religion*, is, we conscientiously believe, in this case, the primary existing cause of this discrepancy. Capitalists shrink with all the susceptibility of the barometer in relation to the natural elements, from the storms and tempests of party passion; but how infinitely beyond all other motives must this privileged class be impelled, by the impulses of feeling and taste, to shun that atmosphere where the strife of religious discord rages with a fury unheard of in any other land![1] There cannot be prosperity for Ireland, until the law, by equalizing the temporalities of Catholics and Protestants, shall have removed the foundation of this hideous contention.

To this consummation we must be ultimately driven; for nothing short of this will content the people of Ireland, because less would be short of the full measure of justice. We advocate no spoliation: let the vested rights of every individual be respected—especially let no part of the tithes fall to the merciless grasp of the landlords of Ireland, who, with many exceptions, may be regarded as the least deserving body of its people. But let the British Parliament assert the right to the absolute disposal of the Irish Church revenues, excepting in cases of private property; and let an equal government grant be applied to the religious instruction of both faiths, *according to the numbers of each*, as is the rule in France and Belgium[2] at the present day.

[1] When, at the commencement of the last century, a commission of the most intelligent merchants of Holland drew up, at the request of the Government, a statement of the causes of the commercial prosperity of that country, they placed the following words first in the list of 'moral causes':—'Among the moral and political causes are to be placed, the unalterable maxim and fundamental law relating to the free exercise of different religions; and always to consider this toleration and connivance as the most effectual means to draw foreigners from adjacent countries to settle and reside here, and so become instrumental to the peopling of these provinces.'

[2] At the last sitting of the Belgian Chambers, a sum of £400 was voted

Such a regulation, by preventing Englishmen from holding benefices in Ireland (there would be no longer the temptations of rich livings and sinecures), would lead to a beneficial influence of the Protestant ministers in that country: for what could so much tend to destroy all hope of their proselyting the poor Catholics, what in fact could be so much calculated to make those ministers 'despised and rejected,'[1] as to send amongst them, as is now the case, and ever has been, strangers, who, whatever may be their worth (and we believe the Church of England clergy, *as a class*, to be at this moment about the best body of men in Ireland), are ignorant of the character and habits, nay, even of the very language of the people?

towards the support of the English chapel; and a similar amount was granted for the service of the Jewish faith.

[1] 'In planting of religion, thus much is needful to be done—that it be not sought forcibly to be impressed into them with terror and sharpe penalties, as now is the manner, but rather delivered and intimated with mildnesse and gentlenesse, *so as it may not be hated before it be understood, and their professors despised and rejected:* And therefore it is expedient that some discreete ministers of their owne countrymen, be first sent over amongst them, which, by their meeke persuasions and instructions, as also by their sober lives and conversations, may draw them first to understand, and afterwards to imbrace the doctrine of their salvation; for if that the auncient godly fathers which first converted them, when they were infidells, to the faith, were able to pull them from idolatry and paganisme to the true beliefe in Christ, as St. Patrick and St. Colomb, how much more easily shall godly teachers bring them to the true understanding of that which they already professed? Wherein is the great wonder to see the oddes that is betweene the zeale of Popish priests and the ministers of the gospell; for they spare not to come out of Spaine, from Rome, and from Remes, by long toyle and dangerous travayling hither, where they know perill of death awayteth them, and no reward or riches is to be found, only to draw the people unto the Church of Rome. Whereas some of our idle ministers, having a way for credite and estimation thereby opened unto them, and having the livings of the country offered unto them, without peines and without perile, will neither for the same nor any love of God nor zeale of religion, nor for all the good they may doe by winning soules to God, bee drawne foorth from their warme nestes to look out into God's harvest, which is even ready for the sickle and all the fields yellow long ago; doubtless those good olde godly fathers will (I fear mee) rise up in the day of judgment to condemne them.'—Spenser.

What chance have these in competition with the Roman Catholic priesthood, who, drawn from the middle or lower ranks of their countrymen, after an appropriate education in Maynooth College (where are always four or five hundred of such students), are sent back to, perhaps, their native village, to resume the personal and familiar acquaintance of its inhabitants.

Would the spiritual interests of the Scotch people be consulted by displacing their present excellent native pastors in favour of the younger sons of English noblemen?

If it be objected that the English establishment is involved in the fate of the Church of Ireland, we answer, that the circumstances of the two are of as opposite a complexion as light is to darkness. In England, the national Church comprises within its pale a great majority of the people; whilst in Ireland we behold a state religion, upheld for the exclusive benefit of one-seventh of its population. Can we, on the face of the earth, find another example of an established Church opposed to the consciences of six-sevenths of its supporters; for although the revenues may not go directly from their pockets, *could the present income of the Protestant Church be raised without the Catholic population?*

What should we say if the Government of Austria, Russia, or Turkey (for each of these has a State religion, differing from ours, and from one another, and yet pronounced by the law of the land to be the only true belief), were found to be applying the whole of the religious revenues of its country to the service of the faith of one-seventh of its subjects? What should we think if the Russian Government were to bestow the entire of the property of the Greek Church upon the Catholic or Armenian fraction of its people? In every country we find the established religion in harmony with the consciences of its people; excepting in Ireland, which, in this, as in other respects, presents to us an anomaly which has no resemblance amongst the nations of the world.

In concluding our observations upon this portion of ou

task, we shall briefly ask—Does not the question of Ireland, in every point of view, offer the strongest possible argument against the national policy of this country, for the time during which we have wasted our energies and squandered our wealth upon all the nations of the Continent; whilst a part of our own empire, which, more than all the rest of Europe, has needed our attention, remains to this hour an appalling monument of our neglect and misgovernment? Add to this, that our efforts have been directed towards the assistance of states for whose welfare we are not responsible; whilst our oppression and neglect have fallen upon a people over whom we are endowed with the power and accountable privileges of government—and the extent of the injustice of our statesmen becomes fully disclosed.

Conclusion.

The neglect of those duties which, in such a case, devolve upon the governor, as in the instance of every infringement of moral obligations, bears within it the seeds of self-chastisement. The spectacle of Ireland, operating like a cancer in the side of England—of Poland, paralyzing one arm of the giant that oppresses her—of the two millions of negroes in the United States, whose future disposal baffles the ingenuity of those statesmen and philanthropists who would fain wash out this indelible stain upon their religion and government:—these are amongst the lessons, which, if viewed properly, serve to teach mankind that no deed of guilt or oppression can be perpetrated with impunity, even by the most powerful—that, early or late, the invincible cause of truth will triumph against every assault of violence or injustice.

May the middle classes of Great Britain, in whom the government of this country is now vested, profit, in the case of Ireland, by these morals of past history!

ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND AMERICA

III.—AMERICA

It is a singular fact, that, whilst so much of the time and attention of our statesmen is devoted to the affairs of foreigners, and whilst our debates in Parliament, and the columns of our newspapers, are so frequently engrossed with the politics of petty states, such as Portugal, Belgium, and Bavaria, little notice is taken of the country that ought, beyond all others, to engage the attention, and even to excite the apprehension, of this commercial nation.

A considerable portion of our countrymen have not yet reconciled themselves to the belief, that the American colonies of 1780 are now become a first-rate independent power. The more aged individuals of this party, embracing, of course, a considerable section of the House of Peers, possess a feeling of half pique and half contempt towards the United States, somewhat analogous to that which the old Scotch Jacobite lady described by Burns, indulged with reference to Great Britain more than half a century after it had *rebelled*, as she persisted in designating it, against the legitimate rule of the Stuarts.

We have met with persons of this very respectable and influential party, who believe, conscientiously, that the Americans threw off the yoke of the mother country, merely with a view to escape the payment of certain sums of money due to English creditors;[1] and that they have ever since been

[1] 'Who could their Sovereign, in their purse, forget,
And break allegiance but to cancel debt.'
MOORE.

struggling after a dubious kind of subsistence, by incurring fresh debts with us, and occasionally repaying our credulity in no very creditable coin. If these be told that the people of the United States constitute our largest and most valuable commercial connection—that the business we carry on with them is nearly twice as extensive as with any other people, and that our transactions are almost wholly conducted on ready-money terms—they will express surprise; but then they will predict that no good will arise ultimately from trading with Yankee Republicans.

English ignorance of the United States.

If a word be said about the well-known religious and moral character of the Americans, these worthy people will stop you with the exclamation of, 'How can there be religion or morality in a country that maintains no established Church?'

Offer to enter into argument with these spirits of olden time, or to adduce evidence in reference to the present condition of the American States, and, ten to one, you will find that they have read the works of no authors or travellers upon that country, with the exception of those of Moore, Mrs. Trollope, and Basil Hall. If the news-rooms and the libraries that are under the direction of this prejudiced party be consulted, the former will be found to contain no specimens of the millions of newspapers that issue, cheap as waste paper, from the press of the United States; whilst, from the shelves of the latter, all books[1] calculated to give a favourable picture

[1] An instance of this nature has come to our own knowledge. A gentleman presented to the Lincoln Mechanics' Institution a copy of Stuart's work on America (probably the best, because the most matter-of-fact and impartial of all the writers upon that country), which an influential and wealthy individual of the neighbourhood, one of the patrons of the society, induced the committee to reject.

We do not feel intolerant towards these errors of judgment, the fruits of ignorance or a faulty education. The only wonder is, in this instance, to find such a character so out of his element, as to be supporting a Mechanics' Institute at all!

of the state of its flourishing community, are scrupulously excluded.

Should we look into the periodical journals which are under the patronage of the same class, we shall find the United States' news but rarely admitted to their columns, unless it be of a nature that tends to depreciate the character of republican institutions, or serves as an occasion for quizzing the social peculiarities of American society.

Yet it is to the industry, the economy, and peaceful policy of America, and not to the growth of Russia, that our statesmen and politicians, of whatever creed, ought to direct their anxious study; for it is by these, and not by the efforts of barbarian force, that the power and greatness of England are in danger of being superseded; yes, by the successful rivalry of America, shall we, in all probability, be placed second in the rank of nations.

Nor shall we retard, but rather accelerate this fate, by closing our ears, or shutting our eyes, to all that is passing in the United States. We regard it as the first duty of every British statesman, who takes an enlightened interest in the permanent grandeur of this country, however unpalatable the task may prove, to weigh, in comparison with all the features of our national policy, the proceedings in corresponding measures on the other side of the Atlantic. Possibly we may not, after all, be enabled to cope with our more fortunate rivals in the energy or wisdom of their commercial legislation, owing to the embarrassments and burdens with which we are encumbered; but, still, it only the more becomes the character for high moral courage that belongs to us, to strive to understand from which quarter danger is the most to be apprehended.

A glance at the future and its probabilities.

By danger, we do not, of course, allude to warlike hostilities. England and America are bound up together in peaceful fetters, by the strongest of all the ligatures that can bind two nations to each other, viz. commercial interests; and which, every succeeding year, renders *more impossible*, if the term may be

used, a rupture between the two Governments. This will be sufficiently apparent when we state, that a population of upwards of a million of the inhabitants of this country, supported by the various branches of the cotton industry, dependent for the supply of the raw material upon the United States,[1] would be deprived of subsistence; at the same time that a capital of thirty millions sterling, would, for the moment, be annihilated—if such a catastrophe were to occur as the suspension of the commerce between England and the United States; whilst the interests of the Americans would be scarcely less vitally affected by the same circumstance.

But we allude to the danger in which we are placed, by being overshadowed by the commercial and naval ascendancy of the United States. It has been through the peaceful victories of mercantile traffic, and not by the force of arms, that modern States have yielded to the supremacy of more successful nations. Thus the power and civilization of maritime Italy succumbed to the enterprise of Spain and Portugal; these again were superseded by the more industrious traders of Holland; who, in their turn, sank into insignificance before the gigantic growth of the manufacturing industry of Great Britain; and the latter power now sees, in America, a competitor in every respect calculated to contend with advantage for the sceptre of naval and commercial dominion.

Whether we view the rapid advance of the United States, during the last forty years, in respect of population or wealth, it is equally unparalleled in any other age or country. The past history, however, of this country, is so well known, indeed it is compressed into so short a space of recent history, that it would be trite to dwell upon it: our object is to draw a short comparison between the future prospects of the two countries.

[1] The total amount of cotton worked up in this country in 1832 was 277,260,490 lbs., of which 212,313,690 lbs. came from the United States. In 1901 we imported nearly 16,000,000 cwts. of cotton, of which over 13,000,000 cwts. came from the United States.

The population of the United States was, at the first census, taken in 1790, found to be 3,929,328; and, in 1830, the number had, according to the fifth Government return, reached 12,856,171; exhibiting an increase, during the last ten years, of thirty-three per cent.; that is, doubling itself in rather less than twenty-five years.[1] In 1831, the population of the British Islands amounted to 24,271,763, being an increase of about fourteen per cent. upon the enumeration for 1821.[2] Looking, therefore, to the present proportionate increase of the two countries, and *considering the relative circumstances of each*, it may be predicted, that, in thirty years, the numbers of the two people will be about equal; and we further find, that, at the same ratio of augmentation, and making no allowance for the probable increase of emigration from Europe, the population of the United States will, in seventy years from this time—that is, during the lifetime of individuals now arrived at maturity—exceed one hundred millions.

A comparison of Great Britain with the United States.

Population.

These circumstances demonstrate the rapid tendency towards a superiority, so far as numbers go; but we apprehend that, in respect to the comparison of our commercial prospects with those of America, the position of Great Britain does not, according to facts which we have to state, wear a more flattering aspect.

We find, by a table in the *American Almanack* for 1835, that the exports from the United States, for the year ending the 25th September, 1833, amounted to 90,140,000 dollars, or about twenty millions sterling of our money.

The British exports for the same period were £47,000,000, of which thirty-six millions were of home commodities or manufactures, whilst the remaining eleven millions consisted

[1] According to the census of 1860, the population of the United States was 31,676,267; in 1900 it was 76,303,087.

[2] The population of the United Kingdom in 1861 was 29,346,834; in 1901 it was 41,456,953.

of foreign and colonial produce. But it will be proper to exclude the colony trade from the question altogether, unless, in order to state the matter fairly, we agree to take into account, at the same time, the inhabitants of our dependencies, which would not improve our case.

Trade.

Now, in order to institute a fair comparison between the respective trades of the two countries, it will be necessary to bear in mind, that, at the above period, the population of America was about fourteen millions, whilst that of the British empire may be reckoned to have been twenty-five and one-half millions.

We arrive, then, at this result, that, whilst our population, as compared with that of the United States, is as $25\frac{1}{2}$ to 14,[1] our commerce bears the proportion from 36 to 20. Further, if we compare the mercantile navy of Britain with that of America, we find the tonnage of the former, in 1832, to have been 2,261,860; whilst that of the latter, in 1833, amounted to 1,439,450 tons; by all which it appears clear, that America is, in proportion to its population, at this moment, carrying on as extensive a commerce as England, or any other State in the world.

But we should take a very inadequate view of the comparative progress of the two nations, unless we glanced at other circumstances, which will affect very oppositely the career of England and the United States, in their future race of commercial rivalry.

Debt.

This Republican people presents the only example of past —as we believe it will prove of future—history, in which a nation has honourably discharged its public debt; and the greatest financial pressure its Government will in future have to contend against, singular as the fact may appear to us, is the difficulty of applying its surplus treasure impartially to the

[1] Bearing in mind that two millions [nine in 1900] of the American population are negroes, it makes the commerce decidedly in favour of the United States.

services of the separate States. The time is gone by, we believe, when people could be found to argue that a national debt is a national blessing.[1] Sure we are, that, in our case, no person possessing sound reason will deny that we, who find it necessary to levy upwards of thirty millions annually upon the necessaries of life, must be burdened with grievous disadvantages, when brought into commercial competition with the untaxed labour of the inhabitants of America.

But it is not only the load of debt, heavy as that is, that we have to contend with; our oppressive public establishments are, throughout, modelled, *unnecessarily, we believe, for the service of the commonwealth*, upon a scale enormously disproportioned to those of our more economical rivals. We will pass by the whole of our civil expenditure, because we have not space for the detailed notice of its individual items; and we shall proceed to notice, as more connected with the design of this pamphlet, our army and navy, as compared with the military and naval forces of the United States.

We find, from a table in Reuss's *Statistics of the United States*, that the number of seamen in the American mercantile navy is estimated at 86,000; whilst the States Government

[1] Another fanciful theory upon the subject of the debt, invented, we believe, by Coleridge (it must have been by a *poet*, for the consolation of less ideal minds), has been lately promulgated. We are told that the country is none the worse off for the national debt, because it is all owing to Englishmen; and that, therefore, it is only like drawing off the blood from one part of the body to inject it into another vein—*it is still all in the system*. We feel sorry to molest so comfortable an illusion.

But does it make no difference in what manner the *outlay* is invested—whether eight hundred millions of capital be sunk in the depths of the sea, or put out to good interest? Is there no difference between such a sum being thrown away, *destroyed, annihilated*, in devastating foreign countries, whilst the nation is called upon, out of its remaining capital, and with its gratuitous labour, to pay the interest—and the like amount being employed in making canals, railways, roads, bridges, drains, docks, etc.; planting trees, educating the people, or in any other way in which it *would return its own interest of capital?*

employs, in vessels of war, 6000 [1] men. The British merchants' service, exclusive of the colonial registry, supports 140,000 sailors; and the number voted for the royal navy, in 1833, was 27,000 men. Thus, then, we arrive at the unsatisfactory result, that, whilst in America, the Government's, as compared with the merchants' service, contains in the proportion of hands, rather less than one in fourteen, the number of men employed in the royal navy of Britain, in comparison with the quantity supported by the merchants' service, is nearly in the ratio of one to five.

Navies.

The royal navy of England, actually in commission at this time (see the *United Service Magazine* for February), consists of one hundred and forty-eight vessels of war; of which there appear to be, according to the same authority, forty-six in the different harbours of Great Britain, thirty-three in the Mediterranean, thirteen on the coast of Africa,[2] twenty-seven in the West Indies, and the remainder in various other destinations.

We find, in the *American Almanack* for 1835, the United States navy given as twenty-one ships of war, of the following description:—One line-of-battle ship, three frigates, ten sloops, seven schooners.[3]

[1] We believe, almost incredible as the fact is even to ourselves, that the British naval *commissioned* officers exceed, by upwards of a thousand, the whole number of the men and officers of the American navy. A comment of a similar tenor, applied to the army of England, is to be found in a following page.

Yet we are in the twentieth year of peace, and every King's speech assures us of the friendly disposition of all foreign powers!

[2] Upon what principle of justice are the people of these realms subjected to the whole expense of attempting to put down the slave trade? We say attempting, because it is well known that the traffic is carried on as actively as ever; and, during the last year, the number of negroes conveyed away from the shores of Africa has been estimated at twenty thousand. Here is a horrid trade, which will entail a dismal reckoning, at the hands of Providence, upon the future generations of these countries that encourage it! But by what right, by what credentials from on high, does England lay claim to the expensive and vain office of keeping all mankind within the pale of honesty?

[3] These statements refer to the ships in commission. Our navy

It appears, then, that our royal navy contains, as nearly as possible, seven times as many ships as are to be found in the Government service of America.

Now, whatever objections may be urged with respect to other branches of expenditure, against a comparison of our burthens with the corresponding economy on the other side of the Atlantic, we think no reasonable mind will deny, that it is by reference to the commerce of a people alone that we can form a correct judgment of their policy, so far as the marine service is concerned, and judge of their ability to support permanently their naval establishments.

The disadvantageous nature of our position, in comparison with that of America, will be better understood, if we repeat in two words, as the substance of what we have proved from the foregoing figures, that, whilst the population, exports, tonnage, and mercantile seaman of Great Britain are not double those of the United States, our royal Navy is about six times as great as the corresponding Government force of that country.

But, if we proceed to a comparison of the land forces, we shall find them to exhibit a yet more striking disproportion in the burthens of the two nations.

The entire military service of America, comprises rather less than 7000 men. In 1833, the Parliament of Great Britain voted 90,000 soldiers for the army of this country. Here, then, we perceive the odds are—still bearing in mind the population, etc., of the two countries—as nearly as possible, six to one against us. **Armies.**

If we had the space, however, to allow of our entering into a comparison of details, we should find that the proportion of our officers greatly exceeds the above ratio. It will suffice to prove this, when we add, that the number of our commissioned

comprises about six hundred vessels of all sizes and in all conditions. The whole American naval force consists of seventy ships. Yet Sir James Graham, when bringing forward our navy estimates for 1833, actually made use of this comparison to justify our force. So much for the *usefulness* of that which is called dexterity in debate!

officers alone, at this time, exceeds the entire amount of the army of the United States; and of these we see, by the army list for 1835, that 2087 are field officers, of and above the rank of major.

To render the comparison of the respective burthens of the two people more simple and complete, we shall add their expenditure under these heads.

In the budget of 1833, the army and navy estimates of Great Britain were as follows:—

Army	£7,006,496
Navy	4,505,000
Ordnance	1,634,817

making a total of £13,146,313 for these warlike purposes.

In 1832, according to the *American Almanack* for 1835, the military service of the United States, including fortifications, arsenals, armouries, ordnance, internal improvements, etc., cost £1,134,589; whilst the navy estimate was for £817,100, making a total of £1,951,689.

Thus, it appears, that our gross expenditure, under the United States heads, is in the ratio of six and a half to one, as compared with that of America;—a country, be it repeated, whose population, trade, and registered tonnage, are more than the half of our own—a country, too, whose public debt is cancelled, whilst ours amounts to nearly eight hundred millions!

But it will be said, that our local position making it necessary to guard our shores with this demonstration of power, and our colonies calling for a vigilant protection, render unfair a comparison of this kingdom with the United States. We believe it might be shown, that the dependencies of Great Britain are, at this moment, and, in future, are destined still more to be, the source of a considerable amount of taxation and pecuniary loss to the mother country; and we trust that some abler pen will be applied to the elucidation of this important question.

With respect to our proximity to the Continent, we recommend the experiment to be tried, whether that need necessarily embroil us in continental politics. Let us imagine that all our ambassadors and consuls were instructed to take no further share in the domestic concerns of European nations, but, throwing overboard the question of the balance of power—as we have long done that equally absurd bugbear of our ancestors, the balance of trade—to leave all those people to their own quarrels, and to devote their attention, exclusively, after the example of the Americans, to the *commercial interests* of their country. This might prevent our diplomatists displaying their address in finessing with Metternich, or Pozzo di Borgo: it might save the bones of our couriers, who now scour the continent of Europe, carrying despatches and protocols; and it might enable us to dispense with the services of one-half of the establishment at the foreign office. But will any one who understands the subject, pretend to tell us that our trade would suffer by such a change?

Our disproportionate expenditure on armaments unnecessary.

Or if we imagine that our army and navy were reduced one-half, in consequence of this improvement of our policy, does any person seriously apprehend that these islands would be in danger of being molested by any European power? If such there be, let him recollect that the British empire contains a population of twenty-five millions of free people, compressed within a space of little more than three hundred miles square—probably a denser crowd of human beings than was ever found upon a similar area; and, further, let it be borne in mind, that railroads are now in progress for connecting one extremity of England with the other, in such a way that not only any required force of men, but the entire munitions of war, may be transported, in twelve hours, from Lancashire or Yorkshire, to the coast of Sussex or Kent—thus converting, as it were, the entire island into a fortified position of such wonderful strength that the genius of Vauban or Marlborough could not have conceived anything so formidable.

Which is the power of the Continent that will make a descent upon a people placed in such an attitude?

But supposing even that such a scheme should be contemplated, it will be owned, we suppose, that some preparation for so mighty a conquest would be necessary, which must afford us the necessary time for preparations of defence. No one will contend, that a fleet and an army of sufficient magnitude to pounce upon England for its prey, could be conjured up on the scene, like the creations of Harlequin's wand, without the spectators knowing, or caring to know, that the machinery for so grand a performance had been long in contrivance.

Besides, is it not apparent that henceforth the pressure of their own domestic affairs will engross the resources, and will impair the external power of all the Governments of Europe? *Reform Bills* will be demanded by their people, but they will not be obtained without bloodshed; and all must foresee that the struggle between the antagonistic principles of feudalism and constitutionalism is inevitable throughout the whole of the Continent.

But to recur to the subject of America. It might be said that the primary cause of all the prosperity and happiness of its people is to be found in the wisdom of that advice which we have prefixed for the motto of this pamphlet. Happily for that nation, this precept has been religiously obeyed; for never have the political concerns of other States been suffered for one hour to divert the United States' legislature from the pursuit of the just interests of its own people. The results may be seen, not only in unparalleled advances in wealth and civilization at home, but in the fact we have just demonstrated, and which, we doubt not, will surprise most of our readers, that even the foreign commerce of this people is, in proportion to population, as great or greater than our own; notwithstanding our battles by land and by sea, and notwithstanding those expensive fruits of our victories, the colonies, that, east, west, north, and south, own our dominion!

It is a question of very considerable interest to us, whether America will continue her career as a manufacturing country after the protective duties, which have professedly created her present cotton and other interests, shall have, in pursuance of the recent tariff law, been partially repealed.

It is the opinion of some writers, whose works are entitled to deference, that the United States cannot for centuries become our rival in manufactures. They argue that, with an unlimited extent of unsettled territory to tempt the inhabitants to engage in the natural labour of agriculture, they will not be induced, unless for much higher wages than in England, to follow the more confined and irksome pursuits of the factory or workshop.

The United States as a manufacturing competitor.

But does not the present industry of the population of the New England States tend to prove that there is a disposition, in the people of the older portions of this country, to settle down into the pursuits incident to towns at an advanced stage of society, and leave agriculture to the natives of the newer States? We shall find that the exports from Boston comprise—among other articles of domestic manufacture equally unconnected with the system of factory labour—annually, about 3,500,000 pairs of boots and shoes, 600,000 bundles of paper, together with a large quantity of cordage, nails, furniture, etc.

We are inclined, however, to view the natives of the maritime portion of the Union, but particularly, the inhabitants of the New England States, as eminently commercial in their tastes and characteristics; and, as such—looking to the amount of capital at present embarked in their cotton manufacture, as well as to the circumstance of the raw material being the produce of their own soil, and bearing in mind the prodigious increase that is taking place in the numbers of their people—we profess to see no prospect of this our own staple industry being abandoned; and, if not given up, we may expect from the well-known and well-deserved panegyric paid

by Burke to the enterprise of the New Englanders in prosecuting the whale-fishing, that the competition, on the part of such a people, will be maintained with energy.

The capital employed in the various branches of the cotton manufacture in the United States, is, according to a calculation for 1832, in Reuss's *Statistics of America*, in amount about £11,000,000; and the consumption of raw cotton is estimated at 173,800 bales, or about one-fifth of all the growth of the country, and as nearly as possible, a fifth of the quantity worked up, during the same year, in Great Britain.

The greater portion of all the products of this labour is consumed at home: the rest is exported in the shape principally of heavy calicoes, that have sustained a competition with our own fabrics in the Mediterranean and the East.

Some occasional shipments of low yarns have been made to this country; but these transactions have not been of considerable magnitude.

Bearing in mind that the supply of the raw material of nearly one-half of our exports is derived from a country that threatens to eclipse us by its rival greatness, we cannot, whilst viewing the relative positions of England and the United States at this moment, refrain from recurring to the somewhat parallel cases of Holland and Great Britain, before the latter became a manufacturing State, when the Dutchman purchased the wool of this country, and sold it to us again in the form of cloth. Like as the latter nation became at a subsequent period, we are now overwhelmed with debts, contracted in wars, or the acquisition of colonies; whilst America, free from all burdens, as we were at the former epoch, is prepared to take up, with far greater advantages, the fabrication of their own cotton as we did of our wool. The Americans possess a quicker mechanical genius than even ourselves (such, again, was the case with our ancestors, in comparison with the Dutch), as witness their patents, and the improvements for

which we are indebted to individuals of that country in mechanics—such as spinning, engraving, etc. We gave additional speed to our ships, by improving upon the naval architecture of the Dutch; and the similitude again applies to the superiority which, in comparison with the British models, the Americans have, for all the purposes of activity and economy, imparted to their vessels.

Such are some of the analogous features that warrant the comparison we have instituted; but there are other circumstances of a totally novel character, affecting, in opposite degrees, the destinies of these two great existing commercial communities, which must not be lost sight of.

The internal improvement of a country is, undoubtedly, the first and most important element of its growth in commerce and civilization. Hence our canals have been regarded by Dupin as the primary material agents of the wealth of Great Britain. But a new invention—the railway—has appeared in the annals of locomotion, which bids fair to supersede all other known modes of land transit; and, by seizing at once, with all the energy of a young and unprejudiced people, this greatest discovery of the age, and planting, as it were, its fruits first throughout the surface of their territory, the Americans have made an important stride in the career of improvement, in advance of every nation of Europe.

American railway enterprise in 1835.

The railroads of America present a spectacle of commercial enterprise, as well as of physical and moral triumph, more truly astonishing, we consider, than was ever achieved in the same period of time in any other country. Only in 1829 was the experiment first made, between Liverpool and Manchester, of applying steam to the navigation of land, so to speak, by means of iron railways, for the conveyance of passengers and merchandise; and now, in 1835, being less than seven years after the trial was first made and proved successful, the United States of America contain upwards of seventeen hundred miles of railroads in progress of construction, and of

which no less than one thousand miles are complete and in actual use.[1]

The enthusiasm with which this innovation upon the ancient and slower method of travelling was hailed in America —by instituting a newspaper expressly for its advocacy, and

[1] 'The railroads, which were partly finished, partly in progress, at the time when I visited the United States, were as follows:—

	Miles.
Baltimore and Ohio (from Baltimore and Pittsburgh)	250
Massachusetts (from Boston to Albany)	200
Catskil to Ithaca (State of New York)	167
Charleston to Hamburgh (South Carolina)	135
Boston and Brattleboro' (Massachusetts and Vermont)	114
Albany and New York	160
Columbia and Philadelphia (from Philadelphia to York)	96
Lexington and Ohio (from Lexington to Cincinnati)	75
Camden and Amboy (New Jersey)	60
Baltimore and Susquehanna (Maryland)	48
Boston and Providence (Massachusetts and Rhode Island)	43
Trenton and Philadelphia	30
Providence and Stonington	70
Baltimore and Washington	38
Holliday's Burgh and Johnstown (Pennsylvania)	37
Ithaca and Oswego (New York)	28
Hudson and Berkshire (New York and Massachusetts)	25
Boston and Lowell (Massachusetts)	24
Schenectady and Saratoga (New York)	21½
Mohawk and Hudson (New York)	15
Lackawaxen (from Honesdale to Carbondale, Pennsylvania)	17
Frenchtown to Newcastle (Delaware and Maryland)	16
Philadelphia and Norristown (Pennsylvania)	15
Richmond and Chesterfield (Virginia)	12
Mauch Chunk (Pennsylvania)	9
Haarlem (from New York to Haarlem)	8
Quincey (from Boston to Quincey)	6
New Orleans (from Lake Pontchartrain to Orleans)	5¼

'The extent of all the railroads forms an aggregate of one thousand seven hundred and fifty miles. Ten years hence, this amount of miles will probably be doubled or trebled; so that scarcely any other roads will be used than those on which steam-carriages may travel.' — *Arfwedson's Travels in* 1834. [Note to the Sixth Edition of 'England, Ireland, and America.']

by the readiness of support which every new project of the kind encountered—evinced how well this shrewd people discovered, at a glance, the vast advantages that must accrue to whichever nation first effected so great a saving in that most precious ingredient of all useful commodities, time, as would be gained by the application of a discovery which trebled the speed, at the same time reducing the money-cost, of the entire intercourse of the community.

Already are all the most populous districts of the United States intersected by lines of railroads; whilst, among the number of unfinished, but fast advancing undertakings, is a work, now half completed, for connecting Baltimore on the Chesapeake with the Ohio river at Wheeling, a distance of more than two hundred and fifty miles.

Not content, however, with all that has been done, or is still doing, a scheme is at present favourably agitated in the public press of that country, that shall connect Washington city with New Orleans, by a series of railways, which, with those already in progress between New York and Washington, will join the Atlantic at the mouth of the Hudson and the Mexican Gulf; a project, which, if completed, will enable a traveller to visit New York from New Orleans in four days —a transition of scene that may be better appreciated, when it is remembered, that a person might pass, in winter, from the frozen banks of the Hudson into the midst of the orange and sugar regions of the Mississippi in about ninety hours! Other plans, of even a more gigantic character, are marked out as in contemplation, upon the latest map published of the United States [1]—plans that nothing but the prodigies already achieved by this people, prevent us from regarding as chimerical.

It demands not a moment's reflection to perceive the immense advantages that must ensue from these improvements to a country which, like America, contains within itself, though scattered over so wide a surface, all the elements of

[1] By Amos Lay.

agricultural and manufacturing greatness. By subjecting this vast territory to the dominion of steam, such an approximation of the whole is attained, that the coals and iron of Pennsylvania, the lead of Missouri, the cotton of Georgia, the sugar of Louisiana, and the havens of New York and New England, will all be brought into available connection with each other; in fact, by the almost miraculous power of this agent, the entire American continent will, for all the purposes of commercial or social intercourse, be compressed into an area not larger than that of England, supposing the latter to possess only her canals.

Nothing more strongly illustrates the disadvantages under which an old country, like Great Britain, labours in competing with her younger rival, than to glance at the contrast in the progress of railroads in the two Empires.

At the same time that, in the United States, almost every day beheld a new railway company incorporated, by some one of the State's legislatures, at the cost only of a few dollars, and nearly by acclamation, the British Parliament intercepted by its votes some of the most important projects that followed in the train of the Liverpool railroad.

Difficulties of railway promotion in in England.

The London and Birmingham company, after spending upwards of forty thousand pounds, in attempting to obtain for its undertaking the sanction of the legislature, was unsuccessful in the House of Lords. The following characteristic questions are extracted from the evidence taken before the committee:—

'Do you know the name of Lady Hastings' place?—How near to it does your line go?—Taking the look-out of the principal rooms of the house, does it run in front of the principal rooms?—How far from the house is the point where it becomes visible?—That would be about a quarter of a mile?—Could the engines be heard in the house at that distance?—Is there any cutting or embankment there?—Is it in sight of the house?—Looking to the country, is it not possible that the line could be taken at a greater distance from the residence of Lady Hastings? . . .

'Was that to pass through Lords Derby and Sefton's land?—Yes, they both consented. They threw us back the first year, and we lost such a line as we could never get again. Since which they have consented to the other line going through their property. . . . Supposing that line as easy for you as the present, was there any objection arising from going through anybody's park?'

The following question, put on the same occasion, by a peer to a shopkeeper, is one that probably would not have been asked by any other person but a hereditary legislator:—

'Can it be of any great importance whether the article goes there in five or six hours, or in an hour and a half?'

The Brighton and several other railways were abandoned, through dread of the expensive opposition that was threatened in Parliament; amongst which the Great Western line was successfully opposed by the landowners, seconded by the heads of Eton College, under the plea that it would tend to impair the character of the scholars! And a large party, headed by the Marquis of Chandos, actually met in public to celebrate, with drinking and rejoicing, the frustration of this grand improvement. Yet this nobleman has since had the offer of a voice in the cabinet council of the King; and, but that he is as honest as he most assuredly is unenlightened and prejudiced, he might now be one of the ministers of this commercial country.

But to recur to the consideration of affairs on the other side of the Atlantic. There is another peculiarity in the present attitude of the American people, as compared with our own, that is probably more calculated than all others to accelerate their progress towards a superior rank of civilization and power. We allude to the universality of education in that country. One thirty-sixth portion of all public lands, of which there are hundreds of thousands of square miles unappropriated, is laid apart for the purposes of instruction. If knowledge be power, and if education give knowledge, then must the

Americans inevitably become the most powerful people in the world.

Some writers have attempted to detract from this proud feature in the policy of the United States, by adducing, as examples, the backwoodsman and his family, and holding up their uncultivated minds, as well as their privation of Christian instruction, as proofs of the religious and moral abandonment of American society; forgetting that these frontier sections of the community are thinly spread over an inhospitable wilderness, where it must be acknowledged that no State provision for mental improvement could possibly embrace all their scattered members. When a man is placed at the distance of perhaps ten miles from his next neighbour, he is driven, as Dr. Johnson observes, to become his own carpenter, tailor, smith, and bricklayer; and it is from no fault in the laws, but owing to the like unavoidable nature of things, that the same solitary individual must also be left to act the part of teacher and pastor.

Public instruction in the United States.

But, by referring to the last message of the Government of New York to the legislature of that State, which happens to be before us, we are able to exhibit to our readers, by a very brief quotation, the state of education in that most populous division of the Union.

'In the whole range of your duties,' says this most enlightened address, 'there is no subject in which the interests of the people are more deeply involved, or which calls for higher efforts of legislative wisdom, than the cause of education. The funds already provided by the State for the support of common schools is large, but not so ample as the exceedingly great importance of the object demands.' After some other details, it goes on to say—'Eight hundred and thirty-five towns and wards (the whole number in the State) have made reports for the year 1833. There are nine thousand eight hundred and sixty-five school districts; the whole number of children, between the ages of five and sixteen years, in the State, was five hundred and thirty-four thousand and two; and the number instructed in the common schools in 1833 was five

hundred and thirty-one thousand two hundred and forty. . . . The whole amount expended during the year 1833, on the common schools, cannot fall short of one million two hundred thousand dollars.'[1]

Bearing in mind that this refers only to one State of the Union, containing rather less than two millions of inhabitants, could we imagine a more striking contrast to the above statement than in the fact that, during the corresponding session of the British Parliament, a sum of £20,000 was voted towards educating the people of England; whilst, in close juxtaposition to this, was a grant of £60,000 for the purpose of *partly* furnishing Buckingham Palace![2]

And in England.

The very genius of American legislation is opposed to ignorance in the people, as the most deadly enemy of good government. Not only are direct measures, such as we have just quoted in the case of New York, taken to instruct the poor throughout the United States—not only are all newspapers and advertisements untaxed—but care is used, by excepting from fiscal burdens the humblest ingredients of the *materiel* of printing—such as paper, rags, type, etc.—to render knowledge as cheap and accessible as possible.

[1] Bright, in a speech which he delivered at Birmingham on the 13th December, 1865, said:—'I have just seen a report of a speech delivered last night by Mr. Watkin, who has recently returned from the United States. Speaking of education, he says that, taking the nine Northern States to contain ten millions and a half of people, he found there were 40,000 schools, and an average attendance of 2,133,000 children, the total cost of their education being 9,000,000 dols. In the four Western States, with a population of 6,100,000, there are 37,000 schools, with an average attendance of nearly one million and a half scholars, at a cost of 1,250,000 dols. Thus, in a population of sixteen millions, there are 77,000 schools, to which every poor child can go, at a cost of £2,000,000 a year. He thought this highly to the credit of our American cousins, and I perfectly agree with him on that point.'

[2] This was written at the very beginning of the education movement, in which Cobden took an earnest and conspicuous part. 'The expenditure from Education grants' in 1865 amounted to £636,000. In the year 1901 the Exchequer grants alone amounted to £9,753,000.

The newspaper press forms a distinguishing and rapidly improving feature in the economy of the United States. In 1834, according to the *American Almanack* for 1835, the aggregate of newspapers published under different titles in America was 1265, of which ninety were daily journals; and the entire number of copies circulated during the year is estimated at ninety millions.[1]

The newspaper press.

In the British Islands three hundred and sixty-nine newspapers are published, of which seventeen only issue daily.[2] The annual sale of these is estimated at about thirty millions.

If, therefore, we compare the newspaper press of America and England together, allowing for the disproportion of inhabitants in the two countries, we shall be compelled to acknowledge that there is more than six times as much advertising and reading on the other side of the Atlantic as in Great Britain.

There are those who are fond of decrying newspaper reading. But we regard every scheme that is calculated to make mankind *think*—everything that, by detaching the mind from the present moment, and leading it to reflect on the past or future, rescues it from the dominion of mere sense—as calculated to exalt us in the scale of being; and whether it be a newspaper or a volume that serves this end, the instrument is worthy of honour at the hands of enlightened philanthropists.

We know of nothing that would tend more to inform the people of England, and especially of Ireland, than removing the excise fetters from our press. Independently of the

[1] The census of 1860 stated that 4051 newspapers and periodicals were then published in the United States, of which 3242 were political. According to the census bureau there were 2226 daily newspapers in 1900.

[2] From *Mitchell's Newspaper Directory* for 1865, it appears that 1271 journals were published in the United Kingdom, exclusive of 554 reviews and magazines. According to *Hazell's Annual* the number of newspapers in 1903 is 2457.

facilities to commerce, and the benefits which must ensue to temperance and morals generally, a free press would, by co-operating with a good government (and henceforth it is our own fault if we have a bad one), assist essentially the efforts of those who desire to reduce the expenditure of the State, and help us to dispense with that costly voucher of our ignorance, the standing army of this country.

We have thus hastily glanced at a few of the points of comparison to be found in the prospects of Great Britain and America at this moment. To what shall we liken the relative situations of these two great commercial and naval rivals? We will venture on a simile. Such of our readers as remember the London tradesman of thirty years ago, will be able to call to mind the powdered wig and queue, the precise shoes and buckles, and the unwrinkled silk hose, and tight inexpressibles, that characterized the shopkeeper of the old school. Whenever this stately personage walked abroad on matters of trade, however pressing or important, he never forgot for a moment the dignified step of his forefathers; whilst nothing gratified his self-complacency more than to take his gold-headed cane in hand, and, leaving his own shop all the while, to visit his poorer neighbours, and to show his authority by inquiring into their affairs, settling their disputes, and compelling them to be honest, and to manage their establishments according to his plan. His business was conducted throughout upon the formal mode of his ancestors. His clerks, shopmen, and porters, all had their appointed costumes; and their intercourse with their chief, or with each other, was disciplined according to established laws of etiquette. Every one had his especial department of duty, and the line of demarcation at the counter was marked out and observed with all the punctilio of neighbouring, but rival states. The shop of this trader of the old school retained all the peculiarities and inconveniences of former generations; its windows displayed no gaudy wares to lure the vulgar passer-by, and the panes of glass, inserted in ponderous wooden frames, were constructed exactly after the

The old shop and the new.

ancestral pattern. Such were some of the solemn peculiarities of the last generation of tradesmen.

The present age produced a new school of traders, whose first innovation was, to cast off the wig, and cashier the barber with his pomatum-box, by which step an hour was gained in the daily toilet. Their next change was, to discard the shoes and the tight unmentionables—whose complicated details of buckles and straps, and whose close adjustment occupied another half-hour—in favour of Wellingtons and pantaloons, which were whipped on in a trice, and gave freedom, though perhaps at the expense of dignity, to the personal movements during the day. Thus accoutred, these supple dealers whisked or flew, just as the momentary calls of business became more or less urgent; whilst so absorbed were they in their own interests, that they scarcely knew the names of their nearest neighbours, nor cared whether they lived peaceably or not, so long as they did not come to break their windows.

Nor did the spirit of innovation end here; for the shops of this new race of dealers underwent as great a metamorphosis as their owners. Whilst the internal economy of these was reformed with a view to give the utmost facility to the labour of the establishment, by dispensing with all forms, and tacitly agreeing even to suspend the ordinary deferences due to station, lest their observance might, however slightly, impede the business in hand—externally, the windows, which were constructed of plate glass, with elegant frames extending from the ground to the ceiling, were made to blaze with all the tempting finery of the day.

We all know the result that followed from this very unequal rivalry. One by one the ancient and quiet followers of the habits of their ancestors yielded before the active competition of their most alert neighbours. Some few of the less bigoted disciples of the old school adopted the new-light system, but all who tried to stem the stream were overwhelmed; for with grief we add, that the very last of these very interesting specimens of olden time that survived, joining the two generations

of London tradesmen, and whose shop used to gladden the soul of every Tory pedestrian in Fleet Street, with its unreformed windows, has at length disappeared, having lately passed into the Gazette, that Schedule A of anti-reforming traders.

That which the shopkeeper of the present day is to him of the last age, such, comparing great things with small, is the commercial position of America as contrasted with that of Great Britain at the present moment. Our debt may be called the inexpressibles or tights, which incessantly restrain us from keeping up with the nimble pace of our pantalooned rivals. The square-toed shoes [1] and the polished buckles may be compared to the feudal laws and customs, which, in competition with Wellington-booted brother Jonathan, impede the march of improvement and the enterprise of Englishmen. The powdered wig and queue we shall liken to our Church Establishment, which, although very ornamental and imposing in appearance, does yet engross a great share of the time and attention of our Parliament to adjust it properly,[2] all of which the legislature of our straight-haired competitor has been enabled to apply to the encouragement of a more prosperous trade. The untaxed newspapers of America, with their wide expanses of advertisements, contrasted [3] with the stamped

[1] There is scarcely a large town in England whose prosperity and improvement are not vitally affected by the operation of our laws of entail. In the vicinity of Manchester scarcely any freehold land can be bought; Birmingham is almost wholly built upon leasehold land; Wolverhampton has long been presenting a dilapidated aspect, in the best part of the town, in consequence of the property required for improvement being in the hands of the Church, and consequently inalienable. In many parts, manufactures are, from the like obstructing causes, prevented extending themselves over our coal-beds. The neighbourhood of Bullock Smithy might be instanced for example.

[2] It would form an instructive summary to collect from our parliamentary history, for the last three hundred years, details of the time spent in the vain endeavour to make conscience square with Acts of Parliament.—See the debates in both Houses on Ireland in 1832 and 1833 for examples.

[3] It is not uncommon to find two thousand advertisements, principally

sheets of this country, are the new and old-light windows of the two generations of shopkeepers. The quickened gait of the trader of to-day, and the formal step of his predecessor, are the railways of the United States in competition with our turnpikes and canals. And, to complete the simile, if we would see in the conduct of the two nations a resemblance to the contrast between the policy of the dealer of the old school, who delighted to meddle in the concerns of his neighbours, and that of the reformed tradesman who rigidly confined his attention to the duties of his own counter—let us picture England, interfering with and managing the business of almost every State in Europe, Asia, and Africa, whilst America will form no connection with any one of them, excepting as customers.

What! shall we consign Old England, then, to ruin? Heaven forbid! Her people are made of tough materials, and he would be but a dastardly politician that despaired of them even yet. We say not, then, that this country will, like the antique establishment of the individual trader, perish at the feet of its more youthful and active competitor; but we fervently believe, that our only chance of national prosperity lies in the timely remodelling of our system, so as to put it as nearly as possible upon an equality with the improved management of the Americans.

What England may learn from America.

But let us not be misconstrued. We do not advocate republican institutions for this country. We believe the Government of the United States to be at this moment the best in the world; but then the Americans are the best[1]

of merchandise, contained in a single copy of a New York journal. We have counted no less than one hundred and seventy announcements in one column or compartment of the *New York Gazette*. Of course the crowded aspect of one of these sheets, in comparison with a London newspaper, is as different as is one of the latter in contrast with a Salisbury or any other provincial journal.

[1] We mean individually and nationally. As individuals, because, in our opinion, the people that are the best educated must, morally and religiously speaking, be the best. As a nation, because it is the only great

people; and we have a theory, that the Government of every State is always, excepting periods of actual change, that which is the best adapted to the circumstances and wants of its inhabitants.

But they who argue in favour of a republic, in lieu of a mixed monarchy, for Great Britain, are, we suspect, ignorant of the genius of their countrymen. Democracy forms no element in the materials of English character. An Englishman is, from his mother's womb, an aristocrat. Whatever rank or birth, whatever fortune, trade, or profession, may be his fate, he is, or wishes or hopes to be, an aristocrat. The insatiable love of caste that in England, as in Hindostan, devours all hearts, is confined to no walks of society, but pervades every degree, from the highest to the lowest.[1] Of what conceivable use, then, would it be to strike down the lofty patricians that have descended to us from the days of the Normans and Plantagenets, if we of the middle class—who are more enslaved than any other to this passion—are prepared to lift up, from amongst ourselves, an aristocracy of mere wealth—not less austere, not less selfish—only less noble than that we had deposed. No: whatever changes in the course of time

community that has never waged war excepting in absolute self-defence:—the only one which has never made a conquest of territory by force of arms; (contrast the conduct of this Government to the native Indians on the Mississippi, with our treatment of the Aborigines on the Swan river;)—because it is the only nation whose Government has never had occasion to employ the army to defend it against the people;—the only one which has never had one of its citizens convicted of treason;—and because it is the only country that has honourably discharged its public debt.

The slavery deformity was forcibly impressed upon this people in its infancy by the mother country. May the present generation outgrow the blemish!

[1] A diverting specimen of aristocracy in low life is to be found in an amusing little volume, called *Mornings at Bow Street*. A chimney-sweep, who had married the daughter of a costermonger, against the latter's consent, applied to the magistrate for a warrant to recover the person of his wife, who had been taken away from him by her father. The father did not object to the character of the husband, but protested against the connection as being '*so low*.'

education may and will effect, we do not believe that England, at this moment, contains even the germs of genuine republicanism.

We do not, then, advocate the adoption of democratic institutions for such a people. But the examples held forth to us by the Americans, of strict economy, of peaceful non-interference, of universal education, and of other public improvements, may, and, indeed, must be, emulated by the Government of this country, if the people are to be allowed even the chance of surviving a competition with that republican community. If it be objected, that an economical Government is inconsistent with the maintenance of the monarchical and aristocratic institutions of this land, then we answer, let an unflinching economy and retrenchment be enforced—*ruat cælum!*

Of the many lessons of unsophisticated and practical wisdom which have—as if in imitation of that arrangement of perpetual decay and reproduction that characterizes all things in material nature—been sent back from the New World to instruct the Old, there are none so calculated to benefit us—because there are none so much needed—as those maxims of providence and frugality, to which Franklin first gave birth, and which, gaining authority and strength from the successive advocacy and practice of Washington, Jefferson, and now of Jackson, have at length become identified with the spirit of the laws and institutions of the United States.

An attempt has been made latterly by that class of our writers[1] denominated Conservative, to deride this parsimony of the Franklin school as unworthy of the American character. But we are, at this present moment, writhing beneath the chastisement due to our violations of the homely proverbs of 'Poor Richard;' and it is only by returning within the sober limits of our means, and rigidly husbanding our time and resources, and by renouncing all idle pomp and luxury—it is

[1] Basil Hall's spending class.

by these methods only, and not by advocating still farther outrages of the laws of prudence, that this nation can be rescued from the all but irretrievable embarrassment into which its own extravagance and folly have precipitated it.

The first, and, indeed, only certain step towards a diminution of our Government expenditure, must be the adoption of that line of foreign policy which the Americans have clung to, with such wisdom and pertinacity, ever since they became a people.

If ever there was a territory that was marked out by the finger of God for the possession of a distinct nation, that country is ours; whose boundary is the ocean, and within whose ramparts are to be found, in abundance, all the mineral and vegetable treasures requisite to make us a great commercial people. Discontented with these blessings, and disdaining the natural limits of our Empire, in the insolence of our might, and without waiting for the assaults of envious enemies, we have sallied forth in search of conquest or rapine, and carried bloodshed into every quarter of the globe. The result proves, as it ever must, that we cannot violate the moral law with impunity. Great Britain is conscious that she is now suffering the slow but severe punishment inflicted at her own hands—she is crushed beneath a debt so enormous that nothing but her own mighty strength could have raised the burden that is oppressing her.

Economy and non-intervention.

Again we say (and let us be excused the repetition of this advice, for we write with no other object but to enforce it), England cannot survive its financial embarrassments, except by renouncing that policy of intervention with the affairs of other States, which has been the fruitful source of nearly all our wars.

We trust that this opinion will be generated throughout the population of this country, and that the same spirit will be reflected, through its representatives in Parliament, upon the Government.

In future, it will not be sufficient that no question concerning the State policy of other nations is allowed to occupy the attention of our Legislature, unless it be first shown that our own honour or our interests are involved in its consideration—it will not be enough that our fleets and armies are not permitted to take a part in the contentions of other nations;—all this will not avail unless our diplomatists and foreign secretaries are jealously restrained from taking a share, either by treaties or protocols, according to the invariable wont of their predecessors, in the ever-varying squabbles of our continental neighbours. By this course of policy, and by this alone, we shall be enabled to reduce our army and navy more nearly to a level with the corresponding burdens of our American rivals.

May we be allowed, once more, to refute the objection which will be urged, that our numerous fleets are necessary to the defence of our commerce? Then, we ask, does any one deny that the persons of American merchants, or their vessels, are as safe in every quarter of the world as our own? We have seen to how great a proportion of our tonnage the American mercantile navy now amounts; we have seen how vast an export trade they carry on; and we have seen with how small a Government force all this is protected:—may not an unanswerable argument, then, be found here, in favour of dispensing, henceforth, with a portion of our enormous naval and military establishments?

Hitherto, whenever a war has at any time been threatened between two or more European States, however remote or however insignificant, it has furnished a sufficient pretence for our statesmen to augment our armaments by sea and by land, in order to assume an imposing attitude, as it is termed; forgetting, all the while, that by maintaining a strict neutrality in these continental brawls, and by diligently pursuing our peaceful industry, whilst our neighbours were exhausting themselves in senseless wars, we might be growing in riches, in proportion as they became poorer; and, since it is by

wealth after all that the world is governed, we should in reality be the less in danger from the powers on the Continent, the more they indulged in hostilities with each other.

It is a common error with our statesmen to estimate the strength of a nation—as, for instance, is the case at this moment, in their appreciation of the power of Russia, Prussia, or Austria—according to the magnitude of its armies and navies; whereas these are the signs, and, indeed, the causes, of real poverty and weakness in a people.

'Our public debt is cancelled,' said Mr. Benton, a speaker at the dinner lately held at Washington to celebrate the extinction of the American debt—'our public debt is cancelled; and there is more strength in those words than in one hundred ships of the line ready for battle, or in a hundred thousand armed soldiers.' And, to exemplify the truth of this sentiment, we have subsequently beheld this very people, with only a few schooners and frigates, and seven thousand troops, menacing the French Government, *steeped in debt*, at the head of its million of fighting men, and its three hundred vessels of war.

To remove, if possible, for ever the extravagant chimera that haunts the Government and people of this country, of our being in danger from any possible combination of continental hostilities, let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Russia were to invade Turkey—or that France were again to cross the Rhine, having first seized upon Holland and Belgium, and attack Prussia and Austria—or that the Spaniards should seize upon Portugal—or that the Austrian Government were to invade Naples or Sardinia—or, if such a supposition be possible, let us imagine these powers to be engaged in a battle-royal all together; now, does any sober and reasoning mind believe that Great Britain, who, we will presume, had wisely availed herself of the opportunities afforded by her insular position to remain neuter, would be selected by any one of these powers, in addition to the enemies already opposed to it, for the object of gratuitous attack? Does any rational person think that we

should, under such circumstances, be in greater jeopardy than the Americans from these contentions?

Having already demonstrated that even Napoleon, with Europe at his feet, was powerless in his attacks upon our exports, we are afraid of being tedious in recurring to that subject.

Were a war once more to break forth over the continent of Europe, and were we to stand aloof from the conflict, our commerce and manufactures, instead of receiving injury in any quarter, would be thereby benefited; for, besides the well-known facilities which a state of warfare would give to the smuggler for supplying those very belligerents themselves with the products of our labour, it would, at the same time, put an end to the competition which we now sustain, in other parts of the world, from our manufacturing rivals of Europe. Germany, France, Switzerland, and Belgium, and indeed almost every nation of the continent, for whose independence and existence we fought so long and arduously, have profited by the peace, to exclude our fabrics from their markets, and, in mistaken policy, borrowed from our own restrictive code, to raise up, at great sacrifices of national wealth, a manufacturing industry for themselves.

Thus we find that, at this moment, Prussia is completing a wall of tariffs, which she has been sedulously constructing for many years, and which will, more effectually than did Napoleon, exclude us from the German market—Prussia, for whom we bled, and for whose subsidies we are still taxed! Austria, another of our costly allies, whose disasters our most renowned statesman [1] would not outlive—Austria has, ever since the peace, sealed her territory against our merchandise. Naples—that unworthy *protégé*, in behalf of whose court England's greatest hero sullied his otherwise untarnished fame [2]—Naples repays us with an impost of cent. per cent. upon our manufactures; whilst France has, since Napoleon's fall, been a less profitable customer to England

[1] Pitt. [2] Nelson, Lady Hamilton, Prince Caraccioli.

than she was during the time of his extremest enmity towards this country.

True, at the close of the war, our ministers might have stipulated for, and might have commanded, a trade with all Europe, as some indemnity for our expenditure; but the warriors and statesmen who represented us at Vienna, and who took pains to forward such measures as the military occupation of France, or the erection of fortresses in Belgium, or the binding us to become guarantee for the permanency of the union of the Netherlands, forgot to utter one word about our merchants. It was unbecoming the dignity of our gallant and noble plenipotentiaries to stipulate for the welfare of the artisans and manufacturers of Great Britain. Compare this with the results of the cheap diplomacy of the Americans.

Alas! by what numberless arts, neglects, and caprices (to say nothing of crimes), have the interests of this industrious and greatly favoured people been victimized!

Before closing this pamphlet, we will offer a few remarks as to the course which it behoves Great Britain to pursue, for the future, upon an important question of commercial policy.

Necessity of repealing the Corn Laws.

With a view to enlarge, as much as possible, the capabilities of this people to support the burden of debt and taxation with which they are destined to be permanently loaded, every possible facility must be given to the increase of population, by the expansion of our foreign trade, and which can only be accomplished by repealing the protective duties on corn.

We shall here be met with the cry, that we are desirous of converting England into one vast manufactory, that we advocate the interests of our order, and so forth. Far from nourishing any such *esprit-de-corps*, our predilections lean altogether in an opposite direction. We were born and bred up amidst the pastoral charms of the south of England, and we confess to so much attachment to the pursuits of our forefathers (always provided that it be separated from the rick-burnings and pauperism of modern agriculture), that, had we

the casting of the *rôle* of all the actors on this world's stage, we do not think we should suffer a cotton-mill or a manufactory to have a place in it;—not that they remind us of '*billy-rollers*,' '*straps*,' and '*infant martyrdoms*,' for we never saw such; but we think a system which draws children from home, where they formerly worked in the company of parents, and under the wholesome restraint incident to disparity of years—nature's own moral safeguard of domestic life—to class them in factories, according to equality of age, to be productive of vice. But the factory system, which sprang from the discoveries in machinery, has been adopted in all the civilized nations of the world, and it is in vain for us to think of discountenancing its application to the necessities of this country; it only remains for us to mitigate, as far as possible, the evils that are, perhaps, not inseparably connected with this novel social element.

The present corn laws are founded on the principle of limiting, as far as possible, the growth of the population of Britain within the means of the soil to supply it with subsistence. No candid advocate of a protective duty will deny that it must have this tendency; nor will he dispute, that, to restrict the import of corn into a manufacturing nation, is to strike at the life of its foreign commerce.

It is objected by the landowners of England, that, if the duty on grain were to be reduced, it would operate unfavourably upon their interests, and they claim a protection at the hands of the rest of society. Now, without entering at all into the question of the right which belongs to such pretensions, we shall content ourselves with taking our stand upon the simple ground of necessity, and declare that the people of this country are in an emergency that precludes the possibility of their ministering to the selfishness of any one class in the community.

The interest of the public debt cannot be paid except by the co-operation of our foreign commerce; and this cannot be preserved permanently, unless the price of that first element

of the cost of our manufactures, *food*, be the same here as with our competitors abroad. We are surprised that the question has not before been placed in this point of view by the advocates of a free trade in corn, since it withdraws the subject altogether from that invidious position which it has hitherto held betwixt the rival contentions of agriculture and commerce, and places it under the control of inexorable State necessity.

We have been amazed (if anything could astonish us from this unintelligent party) to find that the national debt is one of the leading arguments made use of, by the economists of the Sadler school, in advocating a restrictive duty on corn. A brief appeal to a very few simple facts will, we believe, not only deprive them of this argument, but, in the opinion of all unprejudiced minds, place it on the opposite side of the question.

Free Trade argument from the national debt.

Our public debt, funded and unfunded, amounts to about eight hundred millions. Let this sum be more fully appreciated, by bearing in mind that it exceeds the aggregate of all the debts of the whole world, including that of the East India Company, amounting to one hundred and fifty millions. Here, then, we have the British Empire, with only its twenty-five millions of population—possessing a territory of only ninety thousand square geographical miles, and containing only forty-five millions of acres of cultivated land (about two-thirds of the area of France), supporting an annual burden for the interest of the national debt, equal to the taxation borne, for the same purpose, by all other States. How, then, can a country, of so confined a boundary, and with no greater population than we have named, find it possible to endure so great a disproportion of taxation? If it be asked, How does France meet her public expenses? we can answer, by pointing to the superabundant production of wine, oil, silk, tobacco, fruit, and corn, yielded throughout an expanse of territory so wide as to insure an almost perpetual harvest to its people. If we inquire, How does Russia maintain her government burdens? the

surplus timber, corn, hemp, and tallow of that country must be the reply. Would we know by what resources Italy, Spain, and America discharge their respective national encumbrances —the excess of the produce of silk, oil, fruits, cotton, and tobacco, over and above the wants of the population of those countries, solves the mystery.

But we demand to know, by what means Great Britain can sustain an annual burden, for interest of debt, exceeding that of these and all other States together. Is it out of the surplus production of its corn? Her soil has not, for the last forty years, yielded sufficient to supply the necessities of her population. Is this enormous demand satisfied by the yearly excess of her wines, silk, oil, fruits, cotton, or tobacco? The sterile land and inhospitable climate of Britain are incapable of producing any one of these. Where, then, lies the secret of her wealth? Is it in her colonies? How, if we are prepared to prove that these are at this moment, and, in future, are still more destined to become, a severe burden to the people of these realms?

Our mineral riches are the means by which alone we have been enabled to incur this debt, and by whose agency only can we at this moment discharge the interest of it.

To satisfy ourselves of this, let us examine the year's return of our revenue, and we shall there discover nearly twenty millions of income under the head of customs duties. How are the commodities, on which this amount of taxation is levied, obtained from foreigners?—are they received in exchange for our agricultural produce? By looking over the list of articles exported, we shall, on the contrary, find, that, out of thirty-six millions of home products, not one million is the unmixed growth of the soil.

These commodities are purchased by our cottons, woollens,[1] hardware, and the other articles produced by the manufacturers

[1] We have the testimony of the Leeds manufacturers, in their evidence before the Legislature, that foreign wools are absolutely indispensable to our Yorkshire industry.

of this country; the growth, to use the term, of the coal and iron of Great Britain—which are, we repeat, the primary sources of all her wealth and power, and the want of which alone prevents other nations of Europe from rivalling her in manufacturing greatness. Of course it is known that our agricultural labour supplies a great portion of the food of our weavers and other artisans, and, therefore, mixes with the results of their industry; but when it is recollected that the cost of food here is from fifty to one hundred and fifty per cent. dearer than in other States, it will be admitted that it is not owing to the cheap price at which the farmer supplies the corn of the manufacturer, that the latter is enabled to undersell his foreign competitors.

To come to the point with those who advocate a restrictive policy on our foreign trade, by a protection, as it is called, of our agriculture, we ask, in what way do they propose ever to pay off the national debt, or permanently to discharge the interest of it, out of the indigenous wealth of these islands?

The whole area of cultivated land in this monarchy is, as we have before stated, estimated at about forty-five millions of acres: at twenty pounds an acre, the fee simple of the soil of these islands (we, of course, leave out the houses, etc.) would very little exceed the amount of our debt. There is an end, therefore, of the idea of discharging the principal out of the real property of the country; and by what means would they who obstruct a foreign commerce profess to pay the interest of the debt, without the assistance of that trade? Supposing that our exports were diminished, and that, owing to the consequent falling off in our imports, our customs were sensibly reduced, from what articles of our agricultural produce would these advocates of a Japanese policy raise the deficient revenue? In France (where the prohibitive system, which has long reigned supremely, is drawing fast to a dismal end) the customs duties only amount to about one-fifth of our own, and the great bulk of the revenue is levied from the land. But, provided that a reduction of our foreign trade rendered such a

step necessary, we ask again (and it is an important question, involving the whole gist of our argument), upon what branch of British agriculture could an augmented impost be levied? May not the recent almost fanatical outcry against the malt tax, the only burden of any magnitude borne directly by the land in this country, serve as a sufficient answer to the inquiry?

The question of the repeal of the corn laws, then, resolves itself into one of absolute State necessity: since our foreign trade, which is indispensable to the payment of the interest of the national debt, cannot be permanently preserved if we persevere in a restrictive duty against the principal article of exchange of rude, unmanufacturing people. To prohibit the import of corn, such as is actually the case at this moment, is to strangle infant commerce in its cradle; nay, worse, it is to destroy it even in its mother's womb.

We recommend the landowners, but especially the great proprietors who constitute the upper house of legislature, to reflect upon this view of the corn laws.

But we have remarked an inclination in a part of the landed interest to slight—to use the mildest possible term—the public creditor; a feeling that shone forth in the motion of the Marquis of Chandos to remove the malt tax—thus aiming at the insolvency of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—without caring first to inquire by what fresh imposts he should meet the engagements of his country. These unreflecting minds are, we apprehend, quite incapable of estimating the consequences that will ensue if ever we should be found unable to meet the interest of the debt—in other words, if the British nation should be declared bankrupt! Let us, for one moment contemplate the results that would follow from such an event.

We find, from a statement in Porter's *Official Tables*, that there are 250,000 persons receiving dividends of and under the amount of £200 a-year. Presuming the families or dependents of them to average[1] two each, then we shall have

[1] To avoid exaggeration, we have named a lower average than we are entitled to quote.

here half a million of individuals looking to the public funds for support. Moreover, we find the total amount of the deposits in all the savings' banks of the kingdom to be £13,500,000: and the number of depositors, according to the same authority, is 412,217, averaging £33 each: taking the families or dependents of these at the same average as before, and it gives three-quarters of a million more. Then there is an immense amount of the public debt owing to charities—including insurance offices, benefit clubs, schools, etc., involving the interests of an incalculable multitude of necessitous persons. Guessing these to amount to only the same total as the last mentioned (for it is impossible to form a correct estimate on the subject), then we arrive at an aggregate of two millions of the middle and lower classes, who are, directly or indirectly, claimants on the national debt.

Now, no one capable of thinking upon such a subject at all will, for a moment, believe that, if we were driven to such an extremity as to rob these two millions—comprising so many of the labourers, the small traders, the orphans and widows—of their subsistence, that the pomp of the court, or the wealth of the clergy, or the privileges of our nobles, would be more secure than the bread of these humble annuitants.

No rational mind can suppose that lords in waiting, grooms of the stole, gold sticks and silver sticks, would be maintained—that bishops and prebends would still be found in undisturbed possession of their stalls and revenues—or that the peers would retain their law of primogeniture, or the right of hereditary legislation, whilst desolation and misery overspread the land with horrors as terrible as any it could undergo from the ravages of half a million of Cossacks. [1]

The cleverest of our journalists has said—and the words

[1] Here let us remark, in reference to the absurdest of all absurd chimeras with which we haunt ourselves, of this empire being in danger from the assaults of Russia—that we are convinced there is, at this moment, ten thousand times more cause of apprehension from the financial evils of Great Britain than from all the powers of the world.

have passed into a proverb—'Before you rob the public creditor, send your throne to the pawn-shop.' And nothing can be more certain than that the national debt (which never ought to have been incurred, and the authors of which some future generation will, probably, deem to have been madmen) must be borne by the people of England, entire and untouched, so long as they can stand beneath its burden. If ever the day should come that sees this mighty fabric crush the nation to the dust, it will bury in its ruins the monarchy, church, and aristocracy, with every vestige of our feudal institutions, and every ancestral precedent—leaving the State, like Mr. Courtenay's sheet of blank paper, upon which the then existing generation will have the task of inscribing a new constitution, borrowed from the freest and most flourishing community of that day, and which, in all probability, will be found on the continent of America.

From such a catastrophe there is no escape, but in either honestly paying off the principal of the public debt, or in continuing to discharge the interest of it for ever. The ravings after an equitable adjustment, and other like expedients, are but the impracticable schemes of those who would wish to precipitate such a calamity as we have been describing.

If every house in England were converted into a Court of Chancery, and if all the men between twenty and sixty were constituted Lord Chancellors, there would not then be a sufficient quantity of equity courts and equity judges to effect such an equitable adjustment of the national debt as is meant, during the lifetime of an entire generation.

The national debt, then, is inviolable; and this recalls us to the inquiry of how it is to be permanently supported; which brings us again to the question of the corn laws.

The only way in which we can lighten the pressure of the debt is by adding to the population and wealth of the country. The agricultural districts have, we suspect—so far as the middle classes are concerned—already experienced that dull state incident to the stationary period of society; whilst, under

the present amended poor laws, we believe that the further increase of the pauper population will be effectually checked. The sole way, then, of adding to our numbers, is to give the freest possible development to the only present superabundant contents of the soil—the mineral products of Great Britain.

By repealing the present corn laws, and putting only a fixed duty of such an amount as would bring the greatest revenue (we object no more to a tax on corn than on tea or sugar, for the purpose of revenue,[1] but we oppose a *protective* duty, as it is called), which, probably, might be found to be two shillings a quarter, such an impulse would be given to the manufactures of this country, whilst so great a shock would be experienced by our rivals, from the augmented price of food all over the world, that a rapid growth of wealth and increase of numbers must take place throughout the coal and iron districts of England, Wales, and Scotland.

The population of Staffordshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Lanarkshire, and of counties adjacent to these, might be trebled in the course of a couple of generations; and there would be no limit to its increase but in the contents of our coal mines, to which geologists assign a duration varying from two to three thousand years!

It will be asked, what would be the effects of such a change upon the agriculture of the country? The best way of replying to this question is, to consider what must have been the consequence to all interests in this country, if, in lieu of the restrictions put upon the import of corn in 1816, a law had been passed, imposing only such a moderate duty as would ultimately produce the greatest revenue, and which, in our opinion, would be found to be two shillings a quarter. The

[1] Cobden soon afterwards acknowledged the error of confounding corn with tea and sugar. *See* Prentice's *History of the League*, vol. i. p. 194, and letter to a Mr. Dick. It is clear from the text that Cobden had not at this time fully thought out and mastered the free trade question, though he had fastened with unerring instinct on the one great remedy.

factory system would, in all probability, not have taken place in America or Germany;—it most certainly could not have flourished, as it has done, both in those States, and in France, Belgium, and Switzerland, through the fostering bounties which the high-priced food of the British artisan has offered to the cheaper-fed manufacturer of those countries.

Our belief, after some reflection upon this question, is (having already very far exceeded the intended limits of this pamphlet, we are precluded from going into details) that, had a wise modification of our corn laws been effected at the close of the war, the official value of our exports would have exceeded, by one-third, its present amount. This is, of course, presuming that our manufacturing population had augmented proportionately;—we believe that, under such circumstances, the before-mentioned counties would have now sustained upwards of a million more than their present numbers; but, as the increase of their inhabitants would not have been equal to the demand for labour, a great immigration must have taken place from the agricultural districts. This would have saved those quarters that frightful ordeal of pauperism and crime with which they have disgraced our modern history. The farmer would, by the offer of other resources for his family and dependents, have been saved from the state of servility into which he is plunged. Instead of the rent of the tenants being dictated by the landlords, the former would, under this more favourable state of things, have been the arbiters of the incomes of the latter. In short, the buyers—*i.e.* the farmers—would, in this case, as the purchasers do in dealing with all other commodities, have decided the prices of their farms—they would not have been, as at present, determined by the sellers, *i.e.* the landowners.

Under such an assumed state of things, this country would, we believe, by this time, have acquired an increase to its present wealth, to the extent of 350 [1] millions—nearly one-half the amount of the national debt.

[1] It is estimated that our annual loss on corn alone is nine millions.

The immediate effects of all this to the landed proprietor would, clearly, have been a reduction of rent; or where the property was heavily encumbered, his estates would have passed into other hands.

We should not, in such a case, have heard of those displays of wanton extravagance that tend so much to demoralize all classes. Instead of the exhibitions of prodigality and insolence abroad, with which some of those proprietors affronted the nations of the continent, and disgraced at the same time their native country—instead of their contributing, at home, to raise and support a palace for Crockford—instead of their dispensing with all decorum, and herding with grooms and black-legs at Newmarket or Doncaster—instead of the necessary consequences of all this, the subsequent ruin and exile of such wastrels[1]—in place of these things, we might have beheld a provident and virtuous proprietary residing principally upon and managing their estates; and who, we verily believe, would, under this supposed state of things, have become richer in wealth, as well as honour, than they are at this day.

But selfishness, which is ever short-sighted, has hitherto governed supremely the destinies of this empire; and we have seen how disastrous has been its rule, not only to its own interests, but to the prosperity of the nation at large. Should the same misgovernment, from no better motives, be persevered in, with respect to the corn question, the effects will be still more calamitous for the future. The public debt, that 'eternal ally of truth and justice' (to use the words of a famous political writer, without adopting his malignancy), will visit with terrible reprisals the monopolists who shall persist in upholding the present corn laws.

We cannot do better than conclude with the words of an intelligent American, as they were addressed to an English traveller. The extract is taken from the preface to Ferguson's *Tour in Canada and a portion of the United States.*

[1] *Wastrel*, in Lancashire phrase, an idle, debauched, and worthless spendthrift—a word that may be useful in London.

'Even with your present burden of debt, if your Government were to renounce all interference with the affairs of the continent, and keep no more force, land or naval, than is necessary for your own security, have no more wars, and diminish the expenditure as much as possible, you would grow so rapidly in the next fifty years, that your debt would cease to be of any importance. I earnestly hope that the passage of the Reform Bill may be only the prelude to an entire change of system; and that your successors may feel, as we do here, that wars do not promote the prosperity of a nation, and have the good sense to avoid them.'

PART II

THE CORN LAWS AND FREE TRADE

I.—THE PETITION OF THE MERCHANTS

(1820)

This memorable petition to the House of Commons was drafted by Thomas Tooke, and, having been signed by a number of London merchants, was afterwards supported by the Edinburgh and Manchester Chambers of Commerce in memorials to Parliament. It was not only in itself an admirable exposure of the evils of a protective system, but led to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee, which, under the inspiration of Huskisson, Baring, Wallace, and others, reported in a sense favourable to Free Trade. Huskisson's reforms followed, but his death, in 1830, again put a stop to financial progress. The burdens on the British consumer at this time (1820) were described by Sydney Smith, in the *Edinburgh Review*, in the following passage :—

'Taxes upon every article which enters into the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot. Taxes upon everything which it is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste. Taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion. Taxes on everything on earth or under the earth, on everything that comes from abroad or is grown at home. Taxes on the raw material, taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man. Taxes on the sauce which pampers man's appetite, and the drug which restores him to health; on the ermine which decorates the judge, and the rope which hangs the criminal; on the poor man's salt and the rich man's spice; on the brass nails of the coffin, and the ribbons of the bride; at bed or board; couchant or levant, we must pay. The schoolboy whips his taxed top; the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road; and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine, which has paid 7 per cent., into a spoon that has paid 15 per cent., flings himself back upon his chintz bed, which has paid 22 per cent., and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a licence of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from 2 to 10 per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel. His virtues are handed down to posterity on

taxed marble, and he will then be gathered to his fathers, to be taxed no more.'

Under these circumstances, the London merchants approached the House of Commons.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland:—

The Petition of, etc.

Humbly showeth,

That foreign commerce is eminently conducive to the wealth and prosperity of a country, by enabling it to import the commodities for the production of which the soil, climate, capital, and industry of other countries are best calculated, and to export in payment those articles for which its own situation is better adapted.

That freedom from restraint is calculated to give the utmost extension to foreign trade, and the best direction to the capital and industry of the country.

That the maxim of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest, which regulates every merchant in his individual dealings, is strictly applicable as the best rule for the trade of the whole nation.

That a policy founded on these principles would render the commerce of the world an interchange of mutual advantages, and diffuse an increase of wealth and enjoyments among the inhabitants of each State.

That, unfortunately, a policy the very reverse of this has been, and is, more or less, adopted and acted upon by the Government of this and of every other country, each trying to exclude the productions of other countries, with the specious and well-meant design of encouraging its own productions, thus inflicting on the bulk of its subjects who are consumers, the necessity of submitting to privations in the quantity or quality of commodities, and thus rendering what ought to be the source of mutual benefit and of harmony among States, a constantly-recurring occasion of jealousy and hostility.

That the prevailing prejudices in favour of the protective or restrictive system may be traced to the erroneous supposition that every importation of foreign commodities occasions a diminution or discouragement of our own productions to the same extent, whereas it may be clearly shown that although the particular description of production which could not stand against unrestrained foreign competition would be discouraged, yet, as no importation could be continued for any length of time without a corresponding exportation, direct or indirect, there would be an encouragement, for the purpose of that exportation, of some other production to which our situation might be better suited, thus affording at least an equal, and probably a greater, and certainly a more beneficial employment to our own capital and labour.

That, of the numerous protective and prohibitory duties of our commercial code, it may be proved, that while all operate as a very heavy tax on the community at large, very few are of any ultimate benefit to the classes in whose favour they were originally instituted, and none to the extent of the loss occasioned by them to other classes.

That, among the other evils of the restrictive or protective system, not the least is, that the artificial protection of one branch of industry, or source of production, against foreign competition, is set up as a ground of claim by other branches for similar protection, so that if the reasoning upon which these restrictive or prohibitory regulations are founded were followed out consistently, it would not stop short of excluding us from all foreign commerce whatsoever. And the same train of argument, which, with corresponding prohibitions and protective duties, should exclude us from foreign trade, might be brought forward to justify the re-enactment of restrictions upon the interchange of productions (unconnected with public revenue) among the kingdoms composing the union, or among the counties of the same kingdom.

That an investigation of the effects of the restrictive system, at this time, is peculiarly called for, as it may, in the

opinion of your petitioners, lead to a strong presumption that the distress which now so generally prevails is considerably aggravated by that system, and that some relief may be obtained by the earliest practicable removal of such of the restraints as may be shown to be most injurious to the capital and industry of the community, and to be attended with no compensating benefit to the public revenue.

That a declaration against the anti-commercial principles of our restrictive system is of the more importance at the present juncture inasmuch as, in several instances of recent occurrence, the merchants and manufacturers in foreign States have assailed their respective Governments with applications for further protective or prohibitory duties and regulations, urging the example and authority of this country, against which they are almost exclusively directed, as a sanction for the policy of such measures. And certainly, if the reasoning upon which our restrictions have been defended is worth anything, it will apply in behalf of the regulations of foreign States against us. They insist upon our superiority in capital and machinery, as we do upon their comparative exemption from taxation, and with equal foundation.

That nothing would more tend to counteract the commercial hostility of foreign States than the adoption of a more enlightened and more conciliatory policy on the part of this country.

That although, as a matter of mere diplomacy, it may sometimes answer to hold out the removal of particular prohibitions, or high duties, as depending upon corresponding concessions by other States in our favour, it does not follow that we should maintain our restrictions in cases where the desired concessions on their part cannot be obtained. Our restrictions would not be the less prejudicial to our capital and industry because other Governments persisted in preserving impolitic regulations.

That, upon the whole, the most liberal would prove to be the most politic course on such occasions.

That, independent of the direct benefit to be derived by this country on every occasion of such concession or relaxation, a great incidental object would be gained by the recognition of a sound principle or standard to which all subsequent arrangements might be referred, and by the salutary influence which a promulgation of such just views by the legislature, and by the nation at large, could not fail to have on the policy of other States.

That in thus declaring, as your petitioners do, their conviction of the impolicy and injustice of the restrictive system, and in desiring every practicable relaxation of it, they have in view only such parts of it as are not connected, or are only subordinately so, with the public revenue. As long as the necessity for the present amount of revenue subsists, your petitioners cannot expect so important a branch of it as the Customs to be given up, nor to be materially diminished, unless some substitute, less objectionable, be suggested. But it is against every restrictive regulation of trade, not essential to the revenue—against all duties merely protective from foreign competition—and against the excess of such duties as are partly for the purpose of revenue and partly for that of protection, that the prayer of the present petition is respectfully submitted to the wisdom of Parliament.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable house will be pleased to take the subject into consideration, and to adopt such measures as may be calculated to give greater freedom to foreign commerce, and thereby to increase the resources of the State.

II.—JOSEPH HUME'S SPEECH ON THE CORN LAWS, MAY 17, 1833

The following speech was delivered in the course of a debate initiated by Whitmore, then member for Wolverhampton. Whitmore had concluded by moving 'that the present system of corn laws founded upon a high and ever-varying scale of duty, while it fails in conferring permanent benefit on the agricultural interest, tends to cramp the trade and to impair the general prosperity of this country : that an alteration in the principle of these laws to one of a moderate duty fixed at all periods except those of extreme dearth, while it would indemnify the agriculturist from the peculiar burdens to which he is subjected, would, by restoring the commercial relations between this kingdom and the corn-exporting countries of the world, tend to improve the trade, increase the manufactures, and render more equable the price of agricultural produce.' This report of Hume's speech is taken from the *Mirror of Parliament*, vol. 21, pages 1850–1853. It has required little editing, as it was evidently corrected by the author. Joseph Hume (1777–1855) was born at Montrose, so that Scotland was to the fore in carrying on the work of Adam Smith.

I AM sorry to say that the conclusion, to which my honourable friend (Mr. Whitmore) has come, appears to me to be totally at variance with the proposition which he laid down at the commencement of his speech, as well as with the arguments which he stated in its support. If I understood that proposition distinctly, it was this : that the present system of corn laws, of averages, and graduated scale of duties, has occasioned great inequality in the price of corn at different periods, and has not effected the object for which they were intended ; and the only conclusion that I could draw from

the argument advanced was that it would be necessary for the existing law to be repealed and a fixed duty imposed, upon the payment of which corn might be admitted at all periods. This appeared to be the natural and, I might add, the only conclusion to which my honourable friend's arguments must bring him. By his resolution he proposes to alter the laws and to adopt a fixed duty, yet he would retain averages, and also a scale of prices and duty under particular circumstances. He would have a fixed duty of 10*s.* for wheat, until 67*s.*, and then, whenever the prices became higher, to make it as at present variable, decreasing the duty as the price advanced, but always retaining the averages.

Fixed duty and famine price.

MR. WHITMORE.—I said, the scale to commence when corn rose to a famine price.

MR. HUME.—Ay; but then comes the question, what is a famine price? Looking at the ordinary prices in England and the rest of Europe, I certainly should not consider 67*s.* a famine price. I recollect that 80*s.* was demanded by the landed interest in 1815 and 1822, as the remunerating price, and I believe they would be pleased to get 60*s.* now. So that a famine price is vague, and the plan subject to all the inconvenience now experienced. I consider a fixed duty on import at all prices, without regard to averages, as the simple and only plan to be tried. I did not rise, however, to discuss that point. It is, and long has been my opinion, and I have heard honourable members in this House declare it to be theirs—that it is the duty of Parliament equally to protect all the different interests in the country. The question, therefore, that I wish to put to this House is this: Are we warranted in giving to one particular interest a monopoly against the other interests? I see no reason for giving the capital employed in agriculture greater protection than the capital vested in other branches of trade, manufacture, or commerce. I maintain that the existing corn laws are bad, because they have given

The food monopoly and the landed interest.

a monopoly of food to the landed interest over every other class and over every other interest in the kingdom. I ask, is that right? Ought it to be longer continued? The honourable member for Wolverhampton alluded to the particular burdens which fall upon the agriculturist, as entitling him to protection; but I am ignorant of any burden borne by him in particular with the exception of the highway-rate.

Several Honourable Members.—Oh! The poor-rates —the land-tax—tithes.

Mr. Hume.—I deny that the poor-rate is a tax peculiarly levied on the agriculturist. All property is assessed to it. The tithes are chiefly paid by the consumer under the existing system; and the land-tax was imposed before the corn laws were enacted; it was laid on all property.

Several Honourable Members.—No! No! The funds are not taxed.

Mr. Hume.—What! do you call the funds property that you ought to tax? That which is your own debt—property? It would be a pretty thing, indeed, if a man were allowed to say to his creditor, 'I will deduct 25 or 30 per cent. from the interest of the debt I owe you, in order that I may be enabled to pay the principal.' That would be an extraordinary doctrine, indeed, if debtors were to determine what part of their debts they were to pay. The question of the funds, however, is not under consideration at present. That is matter for future debate. I contend that this country does not grow sufficient corn to supply its own wants, and that it is a regular importing country. This is proved by the fact that, for the last five years, from July, 1828, to April last, the average yearly importation of foreign corn has amounted to 1,500,000 quarters. By the Parliamentary Paper in my hand (No. 243 of the Session), it appears that, from the 15th of July, 1828, when the 9th Geo. IV., c. 60, the present law, came into operation, up to the 5th of April, 1833, one quarter less than five years, there have been 8,336,983 quarters of different kinds of grain,

and 2,154,768 cwts. of meal and flour, imported and consumed in Great Britian, which clearly establishes that we are a country regularly importing corn; and as long as it is excluded by a high protecting duty varying from *24s. 8d.* when the price is *62s.* to *1s.* when the price rises to *73s.* and upwards, a monopoly is given to the grower of corn against the rest of the community. The amount of that monoply I will not now discuss, but it must be large, and the consequences, I am confident, have been more injurious to the people than profitable to the landowners. I am willing to admit that if the agriculturists are oppressed by peculiar burdens, they ought to be relieved from them, or be allowed a fair and just protection equivalent to all such peculiar burdens. But if the agriculturists suffer no peculiar hardships, it is the duty of Parliament to declare that corn shall be imported free of all duty except such as may be imposed for the purposes of revenue. I do not, and never would, advise the raising a revenue for the State by laying a duty on the importation of corn, or on the food of man; but if a duty is to be levied, as it now is, to raise the price of corn, it ought to be a duty applicable to the service of the Government and the community at large, and not for the particular interest of one class of the people—the landlords—who have had the influence in the late Parliaments to impose that unjust law for their own benefit. On the supposition, therefore, that there are some burdens borne by the land which other capitals do not bear, I am willing to allow a fixed duty to that amount; and, until the exact amount can be ascertained, I shall not be very nice. We have heard, at various times, different sums—from *28s.* to *10s.* per quarter—stated as the amount of protecting duty which ought to be imposed on foreign corn. As times have altered, however these ideas have changed also, and will further change, according as the remunerating price for British grain has been, or shall be fixed. At present I wish to call the attention of the House to a plain and simple fact; with the view of showing

that we can never give the farmer that degree of confidence in the market which he has a right to expect, if we leave it open to the chances of the present system of varying in the course of a few months from 76*s.* to 51*s.* 3*d.* per quarter.

Fluctuating price of corn and its causes.

By reference to the Returns on the Table of the House, it will be seen that on the 19th of September, 1828, the average price of wheat was 58*s.* 6*d.*, and on the 24th of October following, 76*s.* per quarter; that on the 5th of June, 1829, the price was 71*s.* 5*d.* On the 6th of August, 1830, the price was 74*s.* 11*d.*, and on the 17th of September following, 60*s.* 2*d.*; and if we look at the prices under the present corn laws, we shall find that the highest average price was 76*s.* 7*d.* on the 14th of November, 1828, and the lowest average price 51*s.* 3*d.* on the 19th of October, 1832. Such extraordinary alterations in price are not to be found in any article of import, where the ports are always open at a fixed duty, and therefore it is fair to attribute the changes in the price of corn to the defective law which I seek to alter, not to modify.

Advantages of a fixed over a varying scale of duties.

It appears to me, therefore, that, under the existing corn laws of averages and varying duties, the farmer is placed in a very uncertain and dangerous situation, which no experience or care on his part can enable him to avoid: there are scarcity and high prices one month, and large importations, but low prices, in another. What farmers require is, that the prices should be moderate, and the markets steady; and for this reason I did, in 1826, 1827, and 1828, take the course which I would now recommend to the House. In 1827 I proposed that all foreign corn should be admissible at all times at a fixed duty, which I made high in the first instance, beginning with 15*s.* and coming down 1*s.* every year till the duty reached 10*s.* At 10*s.* I proposed it should rest until a committee of this House should have ascertained the exclusive burdens pressing on the land. The division on that proposition gave me little

encouragement to proceed. I, however, proposed in 1828, when the present corn laws were passed, that, instead of the varying scale of duties adopted in them, there should be a fixed duty of 10*s.* a quarter on the importation of foreign wheat, of 8*s.* on barley, 6*s.* on oats, and on other grain in proportion. Now, let the House mark the different result which would have taken place had this proposition, instead of that of the Government, been adopted.

The total amount of revenue raised since the passing of the existing law upon the importation of wheat, barley, and oats alone was £2,284,557; whereas it would have been £3,261,495 had my rates been adopted. Thus the Exchequer would have received a million more, and the community at large would have received great advantage from the improvement which it would have produced in the prospects of our manufacturing interests, by creating a regular trade in corn, and a corresponding export of goods to pay for the corn to the countries producing it; whereas, under the present system, the payment for corn is often by gold.

I will undertake to prove that the present corn laws have been detrimental to the public, without being beneficial to the agricultural interest. The want of employment for our population is the great evil at the present time—for they are made dependent on the poor-rates, the most demoralizing of all systems, for their support, instead of being supported by wages, which an increase of our trade would give. The mass of the population consists of agricultural and manufacturing labourers; and as the number that can be employed on the land is limited, whilst the number to be employed in manufactures is limited only by the demand, that demand, again, being limited only by the means of payment which the world, who are our consumers, have—it ought to be our study and our policy to take from them every article they can supply which we want in exchange for the manufactured articles which are useless to us except as a means of payment for what we want. We generally import raw

Distress and pauperism due to corn laws.

articles, into the price of which little, for wages, enters, whilst the prime cost of all the articles we export consists chiefly of the money paid for wages. Our manufacturing population are generally not three-quarters fed. Many have nothing but a parish allowance to live on, and all are willing to work. A foreign nation producing corn has nothing else to give for our manufactures, and thus by bad laws the populations of both countries are injured. They want manufactures. Our people are unemployed and anxious to work for the food which foreigners can give us. But our laws forbid corn to be introduced, save at monopoly prices for the benefit of the landed interest. Thus the population that might be healthily employed in producing manufactures to pay for corn is starved and thrown on the land for support, and the amount paid in poor rates by the land greatly exceeds the profit which the corn laws give to the landowners. The farmers are not benefited, nor are the agricultural labourers benefited by this course. No. All suffer, and the community at large suffers most. With an open trade in corn and a fixed duty we should have every man in the country fully fed and happy, instead of our present situation in which so much distress exists—distress of our own producing.

But I am told that with our heavy taxes it is impossible we can receive the corn of a lightly-taxed country; and therefore, we reject all corn from countries where it is cheap. That is the statement of the interested landowners who will not understand the operation of commercial exchanges, and, in reality, act against their own interests. I will prove that it is only by extending our trade, increasing the export of our manufactures, and importing corn and other articles of food, that we can expect to lighten our heavy load of taxation. These are conclusions clear in my mind, and I shall endeavour shortly to make them so to the House.

There are one or two points which I shall presently notice, because it is on them that I ground my reasoning upon this subject. I apprehend it is a general principle which cannot

be denied, that every import must be paid for by an export. If so every quarter of wheat imported puts into employment some manufacture to pay for that import, I wish the House to answer this question: 'Can the employment of hands in agriculture be now increased?' I should say 'very little,' for there is a limit to the cultivation of land; but there is no limit to the increased employment of hands in manufactures, save a want of demand. Now, what produces a want of demand? A refusal to take from other countries the commodities which they produce. Fortunately for England, all her imports are raw materials. The cost of the raw material, generally speaking, is not more than 9, 10, or, at the outside, 20 per cent. of the finished article; all the rest is the profit on capital and wages laid out in this country. As the cost of the finished article consists from 20 to 50, 60, or even 70 per cent. of wages, it consequently is most important that every device should be adopted to increase the export of the manufactured articles of the country, by which means the population would be employed in the manufacturing of goods, and in the transactions connected with it, whilst the agricultural parishes would be relieved of the burden of maintaining the loads of unemployed poor with which they are at present filled. Gentlemen who have not given particular attention to the subject may not be aware that whenever stagnation takes place in Manchester, Birmingham, or any of those towns in which there is an immense number of artisans and labouring men, there is a decrease of wages to those employed; and the prices of meat, butter, and other products of the soil fall, whilst the unemployed, however great their number may be, are immediately thrown back on the country parishes to be maintained by the poor rates, in the worst possible manner. The consequence necessarily is to burden the land with an increased amount of poor rates, and to lessen, at the same time, the demand for its produce, the profits of the manufacturer and farmer, and also the taxes to the Government

Imports and exports.

by the decreased consumption of exciseable articles. All thus suffer. Hence the agriculturists are directly interested in the success of the manufacturer, and any check to the prosperity of the latter proves more injurious to the former than any monopoly of the corn laws was ever found to be beneficial. I do not expect to hear it disputed that when wages are high, and the price of food dear, industry is proportionably checked; as it is now generally admitted that any disparity between the price of provisions in two countries has a direct tendency to give encouragement in that country in which the subsistence of man is lowest, and to impose difficulties upon the manufacturers of that country which has food at a higher rate; and the extent of encouragement will be in proportion to the difference of price of food. In Great Britain the price of food is at a higher level than in any other country, and consequently, the British artisan labours at a disadvantage in proportion to the higher rate of his food. In England, therefore, if you have wages higher and corn 30 per cent. dearer than on the Continent, it follows that you are checking the activity and paralyzing the energy of our manufacturers. The manufacturers of Belgium, France, Switzerland, and the United States of America are all actively employed in manufacturing articles of various descriptions, which come into competition with the same kind of articles of our manufacture. Now, if I take the continent of South America as a common market, into which they all enter with us, it is clear that the buyer would not consider the cost at which the manufacture had been produced, but the quality and the price of what he is going to buy. If we are obliged to feed our population 30 per cent. dearer than the population of our rivals is fed, by paying 50*s*. a quarter for corn, which in Europe and America can be purchased for 30*s*. a quarter, the consequence is clear, that the manufacturers of England are placed in a situation, worse by 30 per cent. in the expense of manufacturing their goods, than their continental and

Food and manufacture.

transatlantic brethren. Consequently, the rate of profit which they would otherwise derive from their superior machinery, and their more easy supply of coal, carriage, etc., is ground down by their meeting in the foreign market the manufacturers of cheaper corn countries. What, then, do I ask the House to do? To place the workmen of England on the same footing as the workmen of other countries, and then I have no doubt that we should extend our commerce in every market in the world, and should supply them with better goods at as cheap, if not a cheaper rate, than any of our rivals. We should thus be able to employ a greater number of workmen in proportion to the greater consumption of the goods we manufacture. I ask—would this hurt the agricultural interest? Quite the reverse. At the present moment the people of England are only three-quarters fed, and the result of this improvement in the export of our manufactures would be, that they would be entirely fed. Thus not only would all the corn now consumed be still consumed, at a price equal to that now paid for it, but there would also be a demand for an additional supply to feed those who are now unemployed, and a burden to the country —which could not fail to prove advantageous to the agricultural interests.

Now, sir, the next question is, what would be the operation of a free trade in corn upon the price of corn in foreign nations? Why, the effect would be this—that every country, knowing the rate of duty at which we suffer its importation, would estimate the expense at which they could transport it to England; and adding the expense of transport to the rate of duty, would calculate the expense at which they could supply our market. Our market would thus obtain a regular supply from every country capable of growing corn, and would consequently, by the constancy of the supply, be free from fluctuations such as we have of late witnessed. Would the price of corn fall in this country in consequence? I think, certainly not. There is abundant proof that the opening of our ports always tends

Effect of free trade in corn on the corn markets.

to raise the price of foreign corn to the price in the English market, and not to sink the price of British corn to the price in the continental market. The effects of a free trade in corn, at a fixed duty, in England, would be to place the workmen of England on the same footing as to price as the workmen of Europe and America, and give free scope to our capital, skill, and enterprise—the price of food would rise everywhere to the price in England, because no person would sell food in any other country, if he could obtain a better price at all times in England. By the present disparity in the price of food, the profits of the British manufacturer are so much reduced, that he is obliged to exact from the workman fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen hours of labour to make up for the difference between his and the foreign manufacture. If the corn laws were altered, the British artisan might again be able to subsist by twelve hours' labour, a most desirable event.

If the House will allow me, I will very shortly state one or two instances which appear to me proof, almost to demonstration, in favour of my argument; and these occurred on occasions when we have been suddenly compelled to allow our ports to be thrown open to foreign corn. When there is a reduction of the price of corn in the English market, so as to bring it below the rate of importation, except at a great sacrifice of duty, the owners of this perishable article in the foreign ports will submit to a depreciation to the extent of 20 or 30 per cent., or, I had almost said, to any amount, rather than allow the article to remain on their hands at the risk of ultimate loss. And thus the price of corn in foreign ports when the English ports are shut falls to a degree that is much below the expense of production; and the low prices of corn in foreign ports, when England, their only, or chief, port for export is shut, cannot be taken as an example of what the prices would be if the trade in corn was free, and our ports always open. I know that the low quotations of prices abroad have been the means of alarming our farmers as to the consequences that would take place if the ports were open; but the instances I shall

state ought to remove all such fears. In the spring of 1828, the price of wheat in Dantzic was from 22*s.* 6*d.* to 24*s.* 6*d.* per quarter, and in Hamburgh, 23*s.* to 24*s.*; in England the price was about 56*s.* In November and December the price rose in England to 76*s.*, and we were compelled to admit foreign corn free of duty. The price of wheat in Dantzic rose in one fortnight from 24*s.* to 50*s.*, and afterwards, when it could be exported, to 70*s.* In Hamburgh, from 23*s.* and 24*s.*, the price rose to 68*s.* per quarter. We have, therefore, a right to consider this as a distinct proof that, instead of the prices in England being brought down to a level with those of the Continent, the prices of the Continent were raised—less only by the expense of transport to this country—to those of England; thus tending to prove that England did then, and must continue to, regulate the price of corn throughout the whole world.

The case of 1828.

In the winter of 1829–30, the duty on foreign wheat in England was 30*s.* 8*d.* per quarter, and the price of wheat in Dantzic and Hamburgh, at that time, ranged from 24*s.* to 36*s.* 6*d.* and 22*s.* to 36*s.*; whilst the price in England was then only 51*s.* to 55*s.*; but, in June and July, 1830, the price rose to 68*s.* and 70*s.* in England, and the duty was reduced to 2*s.* 8*d.* On the removal of the duty, the price in Dantzic and other parts of the Continent immediately rose to 51*s.* 6*d.*—another proof that the price of foreign wheat rises, when the ports of England are open, in proportion to the price of wheat in England. In the winter of 1830–31, wheat was low in Dantzic; but in March and April the duty in England fell to 1*s.* per quarter, and the price of wheat rose in Dantzic to 60*s.* 6*d.* These are a few instances selected by Mr. Tooke, a gentleman who has attended very closely to the subject, and whose statements are, I believe, perfectly correct. If these instances are to be taken as proof, and if we were to regulate our proceedings accordingly, England, I again say, would be enabled to regulate the price of corn throughout the world; and, consequently, would

Case of 1829–30 and 1830–1.

possess, in the general increased prosperity of the country, more effectual means of protecting her agriculture than any which she possesses at present. What, I would ask, is the state of her agriculture now? It is lamentable to find that in many country parishes the overseers are paying only 3*s.* 6*d.* a-week to the agricultural labourers; whilst, in others, the poor rates amount to nearly the fee simple of the land. I hold in my hand a resolution recently passed by a parish in Norfolk, to the same effect as that in Hampshire, to which such pointed allusion was made last night. Is it not fit to try whether altering the system which has produced such terrible results to the landed interests and to the labouring population, will not lead to a better state of things? Worse there cannot be; a better, I believe, there may be, by giving energy to the capital and skill of the country to produce exports, by increasing which, alone, can we flatter ourselves with the prospect of finding employment for that part of our population now unemployed. In proof that the quantity of corn imported is small in comparison to our consumption, and that it can affect the price of corn in England but little, I may state that, between the years 1795 and 1815, when the ports were virtually open, the import of corn was only equal to 5 per cent., or one-twentieth of our consumption. And in 1817–19, 'years of high prices,' the quantity of corn imported was nearly about the imports of the past few years. The advantage to Great Britain of a regular free trade in corn would, therefore, be more by raising the rest of the world to our standard and price, than by lowering the prices here to the standard of the Continent.

Now, in regard to our heavy taxes being a reason against a free trade in corn, I think they are strongly in favour of it, as I shall prove. But if that position which I have laid down can be denied, I shall be very ready to hear the reasons assigned by which it is disputed. If I take any great staple article of manufacture—hardware, for instance—it will be admitted that 50 or 60 per cent. of the value of the article when finished has been incurred in wages and for capital.

I know that in some cases the amount of wages and capital comes very near to 90 per cent. in every £100; and in some articles of very fine cutlery, there may not be more than 7 or 8 per cent. for the raw material: but I will take an ordinary and not an extreme case, and assume, that, in the manufacture of £100 worth of cutlery or ironmongery, £50 is paid in wages and profits of capital, and of that amount £25 are paid by the workmen, in taxes paid on the exciseable articles, house rent, etc., consumed and used whilst employed in making the articles. It then appears that out of this £100, £50 has been paid for labour and capital, and £25 of that for taxes to the State. If I, a manufacturer, export the £100 worth of ironmongery, and receive corn or any other article, which I can sell again to realize my £100 in return, I am able to set the same number of men again to work to produce another £100 worth of the same or of some other article, and again to enable the workmen to support themselves by their wages, and to pay the State £25 more of taxes on the articles they consume. But, I do more, for the foreigner who purchased the ironmongery actually contributes the £25 of taxes which I had advanced in wages, and thus assists to pay the charge of the national debt and of the Government. If £100 of manufactures exported, brings back from foreigners one-fourth of its value, in aid of the public taxes of this country, it must be manifest that we ought to push our trade and exports to the greatest extent, and to every country, that we may thereby lay the whole world under contribution to aid us to pay our heavy taxes. Our heavy taxation is, therefore, one of the strongest reasons in favour of a free trade in corn and food of every kind. Besides, the goods we import have chiefly been produced with very little wages and labour, perhaps not 10 or 20 per cent. of the whole value; whilst the articles we export have 50 per cent. and more of wages and labour in them, which makes every exchange the more valuable to us. Our course, then, is clear; if we desire to

The argument from heavy taxation.

put an end to pauperism, or to lessen it, we should import everything we can use or sell, in order that we may employ our unemployed hands, in making the goods by which we pay for these imports. Land, in England, is valuable, because we have highly-paid artisans to consume the produce on the spot. Destroy or take away the employment and wages of those artisans—which the corn laws in a great measure do—and you will, ere long, render the land in Great Britain of as little value as it is in other countries. I need hardly add, that the profits on every £100 of manufactures are much less to the British manufacturer than they are to the manufacturers in other countries, where the price of food and the amount of taxation are not so high. We ought, therefore, to lessen the price of food to our manufacturers, and place them more on a level with the manufacturers who have cheaper food, and also much lighter taxation. I am often told by the agriculturists, that I ought to consider the difference in the amount of taxes paid by this country and by foreign countries, and that it is not fair to the farmers of England not to put at all times, upon foreign corn, a tax equal to the difference between foreign taxation and our own. I have already stated, fully, the bearing of that objection, and I would further ask, 'Would, leaving a large portion of your population unemployed, enable them to pay that heavier tax, or, indeed, any other tax; and if it would incapacitate them to pay taxes, would it not render the pressure of taxation still heavier upon that part of the community which would be compelled to meet it?' I say that by giving employment to your unemployed and starving labourers, which can only be done by extending your trade, you would give them the means of eating meat, butter, etc., and also the opportunity of paying more taxes, by consuming more taxable articles.

I contend that nothing is more opposed to all the principles contained in the speech of my honourable friend, the member for Wolverhampton, than his determination to stand by the present system of averages and graduated scale of duties.

Nothing, I really think, could be more contrary to the whole course of his argument than the conclusion to which he came, of leaving a portion of a bad system in operation. Being, however, of opinion that this is essentially a manufacturing country, and that the value of land and the prosperity of the agricultural interests depend almost entirely upon the prosperity of the manufacturers and the profitable employment of their capital and workmen; being of opinion, also, that land in England would be of little more value than land in Poland had we not the peculiar advantages of wealthy capitalists, of extensive manufactures, and of profitable commerce, with all their necessary attendants, I certainly think that it is the interest of every class of persons in this country, and more especially of the agricultural interest, that we should open our ports wide to the whole world, to receive any and all the articles which every other country may choose to send us, and, in particular, every article of food for man. I am satisfied that no means of relief will be effectual towards the employment of our population and capital profitably until we have freed our own commerce and industry from those shackles which now bind them down. Being of opinion that the manifest effects of the present corn laws are—to leave the farmers exposed to all the difficulties which arise from frequent and sudden fluctuations in price, to create a continual scarcity, and to keep the price of food in Great Britain higher than in other countries, thereby discouraging the export, and, consequently, the production of British manufactures—to keep many of the artisans and labourers unemployed and in a state of great privation, dependent for support on the poor rates instead of their own wages—to increase the charges of cultivating the soil, and the cost of producing the manufactures of the country, thereby to render the industry of the nation less capable of competing with that of other countries, and also to make the people less able to support the expenses of the State, I would alter the existing laws, and place corn on the same footing as other imports are —on a fixed duty at all times. Under these circumstances,

and entertaining these opinions, I have drawn up a resolution to which (if the honourable member for Wolverhampton should take the sense of the House upon his motion) I shall ask this House to give its assent in preference. I, therefore, beg to move that all the words after the word 'That' be left out of the original motion, for the purpose of inserting these words, 'it is the opinion of this House that any sort of corn, grain, meal, and flour which may now by law be imported into the United Kingdom should, at all times, be admissible for home use upon payment of a fixed duty.'

III.—THE MANCHESTER PETITION AGAINST THE CORN LAWS (1838)

The events which led up to this petition may be very shortly summarized. Cobden's great pamphlet, the first document in this volume, had appeared in 1835. In the following year an Anti-Corn Law Association was formed in London by Francis Place, and joined by Joseph Hume, Grote, Molesworth, John Temple Leader, Colonel Peronet Thomson, John Marshall of Leeds, Archibald Prentice of Manchester, and others. But, like so many London organizations, it did nothing.

In the autumn of 1837 (a year of severe distress) the British Association met in Liverpool. Porter and other economists took part in the discussions. Cobden was there, and after one of the meetings he said to his friend Henry Ashworth: 'I'll tell you what we'll do; we'll use the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for an agitation to repeal the Corn Laws.'

In the August of 1838, wheat rose to 77*s.*, and then at last Lancashire and Yorkshire began to move in earnest.

An Anti-Corn Law Association was formed in Manchester, which was to become the Anti-Corn Law League in the spring of 1839. Meanwhile Cobden's idea was acted upon. After some skirmishing with half-hearted members, he, J. B. Smith, and Henry Ashworth, drew up the following petition, which was accepted almost unanimously by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce:—

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled:—

The Petition of the President, Vice-President, Directors, and Members of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures of Manchester, agreed to in a Special General Meeting, held on the 20th day of December, 1838,

Humbly showeth,

That your petitioners deem it their imperative duty to call

the immediate attention of your honourable house to the consideration of the existing laws affecting the free importation of food.

That your petitioners would premise that you are already acquainted with the nature and extent of the cotton trade; combining, as it does, a larger amount of capital, with greater enterprise and skill, and giving more extensive and better regulated employment than any other branch of manufacturing industry. This source of increasing population and wealth, which is now become essential to our well-being as a nation, owes no sort of allegiance to the soil of England; and if it has grown up with a rapidity unparalleled in the annals of trade, history affords us many examples to show how speedily it may, by misgovernment, be banished to other shores.

That your petitioners view, with great alarm, the rapid extension of foreign manufactures, and they have, in particular, to deplore the consequent diminution of a profitable trade with the Continent of Europe; to which, notwithstanding the great increase in population since the termination of the war, the exports have been actually less in value during the last five years than they were during the first five years after the peace, and whilst the demand for all those articles, in which the greatest amount of the labour of our artisans is comprised, has been constantly diminishing, the exportation of the raw material has been as rapidly increasing.

That several nations of the Continent not only produce sufficient manufactures for their own consumption, but they successfully compete with us in neutral foreign markets. Amongst other instances that might be given to show the formidable growth of the cotton manufacture abroad, is that of the cotton hosiery of Saxony, of which, owing to its superior cheapness, nearly four times as much is exported, as from this country; the Saxons exporting annually to the United States of America alone, a quantity equal to the exports from England to all parts of the world; whilst the still more important fact remains to be adduced, that Saxon hose, manufactured from

English yarn, after paying a duty of 20 per cent., are beginning to be introduced into this country and sold for home consumption, at lower prices than they can be produced for by our manufacturers.

That further proof of the rapid progress in manufacturing industry going on upon the Continent is afforded in the fact that establishments for the making of all kinds of machinery for spinning and weaving cotton, flax, and wool, have lately been formed in nearly all the large towns of Europe, in which English skilled artisans are at the present moment diligently employed in teaching the native mechanics to make machines, copied from models of the newest invention of this country, and not a week passes in which individuals of the same valuable class do not quit the workshops of Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham, to enter upon similar engagements abroad.

That the superiority we have hitherto possessed in our unrivalled roads and canals is no longer peculiar to this country. Railroads to a great extent, and at a less cost than in England, are proceeding in all parts of Europe and the United States of America, whilst, from the want of profitable investment at home, capital is constantly seeking employment in foreign countries; and thus supplying the greatest deficiency under which our rivals previously laboured.

That whilst calling the attention of your honourable house to facts calculated to excite the utmost alarm for the well-being of our manufacturing prosperity, your Petitioners cannot too earnestly make known that the evils are occasioned by our impolitic and unjust legislation, which, by preventing the British manufacturer from exchanging the produce of his labour for the corn of other countries, enables our foreign rivals to purchase their food at one half the price at which it is sold in this market; and your petitioners declare it to be their solemn conviction, that this is the commencement only of a state of things which, unless arrested by a timely repeal of all protective duties upon the importation of corn and of all

foreign articles of subsistence, must eventually transfer our manufacturing industry into other and rival countries.

That deeply impressed with such apprehensions, your petitioners cannot look with indifference upon, nor conceal from your honourable house the perilous condition of those surrounding multitudes, whose subsistence from day to day depends upon the prosperity of the cotton trade. Already the million have raised the cry for food. Reason, compassion, and sound policy demand that the excited passions be allayed, otherwise evil consequences may ensue. The continuance of the loyal attachment of the people to the established institutions of the country can never be permanently secured on any other grounds than those of universal justice. Holding one of these eternal principles to be the unalienable right of every man, freely to exchange the results of his labour for the productions of other people, and maintaining the practice of protecting one part of the community at the expense of all other classes, to be unsound and unjustifiable, your petitioners earnestly implore your honourable house to repeal all laws relating to the importation of foreign corn and other foreign articles of subsistence, and to carry out to the fullest extent, both as affects agriculture and manufactures, the true and peaceful principles of free trade, by removing all existing obstacles to the unrestricted employment of industry and capital.

IV.—REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS

This speech was delivered by Cobden in the House of Commons on May 15, 1843, during the debate on Villiers' annual motion, which was rejected on the fifth night by a majority of 381 to 125. (See Hansard.)

THOUGH we have had five nights' debate, the question proposed by the honourable member for Wolverhampton (Villiers) has been scarcely touched: that is, How far you are justified in maintaining a law which restricts the supply of food to be obtained by the people of this country.

In supporting the present corn law, you support a law which inflicts scarcity on the people. You do that, or you do nothing. You cannot operate in any way by this law, but by inflicting scarcity on the people. Entertain that proposition. In fact, you cannot escape it. And if it is true, how many of you will dare to vote for the continuance of the present law? You cannot enhance the price of corn, or of any other article, but by restricting the supply. Are you justified in doing this for the purpose of raising your prices?

Without attributing motives to honourable gentlemen opposite, I tell them (and they may rely upon it as being true) that they are in a false position when they have to deprecate the imputation of motives. We never hear of a just judge on the Bench fearing the imputation of motives. But I will not impute motives, although they have been imputed by honourable and right honourable gentlemen opposite. Dowries, settlements, mortgages, have all been avowed as motives from the benches opposite; but I will take things as

I find them. Upon what ground do you raise the price of corn? For the benefit of the agricultural interest. You have not, in the whole course of the debate, touched upon the farmers' or agricultural labourers' interest in this question. No; honourable gentlemen opposite, who represent counties, instead of taking up the old theme, and showing the benefit of this law to farmers and to farmers' labourers, have been smitten with a new light. They have taken the statistics of commerce and the cotton trade to argue from. Will the honourable member for Shoreham, who took the statistics which the right honourable baronet (Sir R. Peel) four years ago cast aside, tell the House how it is you do not take the agricultural view of the question, and show the farmers' interest in it? There is something ominous in your course. Shall I tell you the reason? Because the present condition of the farmers and labourers of this country is the severest condemnation of the corn laws that can possibly be uttered. During the whole operation of this law, or during that time when prices were highest under this law, the condition of the agricultural labourers was at the worst. An honourable gentleman opposite says 'No.' Has he looked at the state of pauperism of this country in the last Return which was laid before the House? There he will find that up to Lady-day, 1840, the proportion of paupers in the different counties in this country, showed that the ten which stood highest in the list were ten of the purely agricultural counties, and that after your law had for three years maintained corn at 67*s.* per quarter. If anything could have benefited the labourer, it should have been three years of high prices, and after trade had suffered the greatest depression in consequence of your law. If the agricultural labourer had not prospered up to the year 1840, what has been his condition since? The returns of pauperism show an increase in the number of the poor; and what is the present condition of the labourer in the agricultural districts? Is not crime increasing in the same proportion as pauperism has increased? I heard

State of agricultural labourers.

it stated that the actual returns of your petty sessions and your assizes furnish no criterion as to the state of demoralization in your districts; nay, I heard that such was the extent of petty pilfering and crime, that you were obliged to wink at it, or you would not be able to carry out the business of your criminal courts. I hear that both in Somersetshire and in Wiltshire. Honourable gentlemen may cry 'No, no,' but there is an intelligent audience outside which knows that I am stating the truth. And what are the crimes these poor people are brought up for? Why, one old woman for stealing sticks of the value of $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ was sentenced to a fine of 15*s.* Another case was a charge for stealing turnip-tops; and at Chichester an individual has been convicted of stealing mould from the Duke of Richmond. Such is the state of poverty and distress, that they are glad to steal the very earth. Again, what was the fact urged by the honourable member for Dorsetshire (Mr. Bankes) in extenuation of the condition of his labouring poor, but this: that he allowed them to gather up the sticks that were blown from the trees in his park? It was brought forward as a proof of the honourable member's benevolence, that he allowed his labourers to gather the crow's nests which were blown from the trees. And what does all this argue? Why, it argues that which you cannot deny, namely, that the agricultural peasantry of this country are in a state of the deepest suffering at this moment, and that, if there has been any benefit from the corn laws, they, at least, have not derived one particle of a share of it.

I now come to the farmer; and I ask how it is that you, who support this law, have not adduced the case of the farmer? Are there no farmers' friends present who will state his condition? You know that his capital is wasting away—that he cannot employ his labourers—and why? Because that money which should go to pay them is absorbed in your rents. Honourable gentlemen opposite cry 'No, no;' but the farmers of this country will

The farmer and recent history.

corroborate me, and that you well know. . . . Now, I want to ask what benefit the farmer ever derived from the corn laws? I have asked the question of hundreds, nay, thousands of farmers; and, as I am now in the presence of landlords, I ask it of you. I ask you to go back to the corn law of 1815. What was the object of the corn law of 1815? Why, to keep up the price of wheat at 80*s.* per quarter. Did it ever produce that effect? No; for in 1822, seven years afterwards, wheat was sold as low as 42*s.*: and yet your agents and valuers valued to your tenants upon the calculation that they would get 80*s.* per quarter for their wheat. You cannot deny that. And what was the consequence? Why, in 1822, the farmers were ruined by hundreds and thousands. One newspaper in Norwich contained 120 advertisements of the sale of stock in one day. The farmers then came to ask you for another law. You appointed Committees, you went through the farce of inquiring into agricultural distress, and you passed another law, that of the year 1828, giving the sliding-scale protection, to secure them 64*s.* per quarter for their wheat; and then, again, the red-tape men went about to value your farms, on the calculation that the price obtained would be 64*s.* Another seven years elapsed, and then wheat was selling at 36*s.* Then came general distress again, and an application for a fresh Committee. You gave them another Act; and I now come to the Act passed in 1842 by the right honourable [1] baronet at the head of the Government; and now the farmers are again distressed, and blame the right honourable baronet for deceiving them. They do blame, and they are justified in blaming, the right honourable baronet, and I will tell you why. The right honourable baronet, in the speech in which he proposed that law, said that he intended it to give to the farmer, as far as legislation could give it, 56*s.* per quarter for his corn. Now, the right honourable baronet will remember that I called his attention at the time to that point. I saw the importance of it then, and I see it now, and I wish the House to see clearly how the matter

[1] Sir Robert Peel.

stands. The right honourable baronet said, that on taking a comprehensive view of the cost of production and the then state of the country, he thought, if he could secure the farmer a price not rising higher than 58*s*., nor going lower than 54*s*., that these were about the prices the farmer ought to obtain. It is true that afterwards, in the course of the same speech, he said that no legislation could secure that price.

Now, I do not charge the right honourable baronet with intending to deceive the farmers; I do not attribute motives to him; but this I do say, that in dealing with plain and simple men—men accustomed to straightforward and intelligible language—this was certain, however intended, to mislead the farmers in their calculations. But it was a most convenient thing for the landlords to go to the tenant with a promise to secure him 56*s*. per quarter for his wheat, and it was very convenient for the right honourable baronet to say, at the same time, that though the law purports to give you 56*s*. per quarter, still I have not the power to secure it to you. And now, what is the price? 45*s*. or 46*s*. instead of 56*s*. The right honourable baronet distinctly says now he never intended to maintain the price, and that he could not maintain it. Now, then, I ask, what is this legislation for? I ask what it means, what it has meant from 1815 downwards. I will not say what the motives of its promoters have been; but the effect has been one continued juggle played off upon the farmers, in order to enable the landlords to obtain artificial rents. These being paid out of the farmer's capital, loss falls on him, while the landlords are enabled to profit by it, owing to the competition among tenants for farms.

We will not separate this night until we have a perfect understanding of what you do purpose to do for the farmer. I ask the right honourable baronet opposite, when he talks of the prices which the farmers should obtain, whether he can prevent wheat from falling as low as 36*s*.?—whether he can ensure it from falling as low as 30*s*.? As the right honourable

gentleman says nothing, I will assume that this House cannot secure to the farmer a price of even 30*s*. per quarter. Let this go forth; let there be, if you please, no ambiguity on the point—no more deception; let the farmer perfectly understand that his prosperity depends upon that of his customers—that the insane policy of this House has been to ruin his customers, and that Acts of Parliament to keep up prices are mere frauds to put rents into the landlords' pockets, and enable him to juggle his tenants. Now, we shall soon be able to dispose of some other sophistries upon the corn laws. We are told that the corn laws are intended to compensate certain parties for excessive burthens; that is to say, that the landowners, who have had the absolute command of the legislature of the country, and who, to a late period, did not permit a man to vote in this House unless he swore he was a landowner, have been such disinterested angels (for no human beings would do as much) as to lay excessive burthens upon their own shoulders; and when they find it necessary to re-adjust taxation and relieve themselves, they do it by passing a corn law, and then come forward and confess that the law is inoperative. Now, in the first place, I say that the disinterestedness of the landlords on this presumption surpasses all human perfection; it is perfectly angelical.

But, unfortunately, the contrary to the proposition of excessive burthens falling on land is so notorious, that to say a word upon the subject would be a work of supererogation. Let a copy of the statutes be sent, if it were possible, to another planet, without one word of comment, and the inhabitants of that sphere would at once say, 'These laws were passed by landlords.' The partiality of your legislation is notorious; but, if you had been really so disinterested, is it not likely, when you found out your real condition, that you would have put taxation fairly upon the shoulders of the people, instead of substituting a clumsy law, which you admit does not reimburse you at all?

Now we come to another view of this question. We

have the confessions of the right honourable baronet the Paymaster of the Forces (Sir E. Knatchbull), and of the honourable member for Wiltshire (Mr. Bennett); the one to the effect that the corn law goes to pay marriage settlements, and the other that it goes to pay mortgages. Now, if it goes to pay these, how can it pay the farmer? And if you cannot insure the operation of the law, if, after you have passed it, you are obliged to confess that you cannot insure its operation, who, then, pays the dowries and the settlements? Surely, in that case, they must be paid out of the pockets of the farmers. You have confessed that a law cannot secure prices, but as mortgages and settlements are paid, then I say that you have confessed that the money comes from the farmers; and surely this is sufficient to account for their distress. I contend, then, that if this law creates a profit at all, that profit passes into rent. And this proposition rests on more than the admission of the Paymaster of the Forces, or of the honourable member for Wiltshire. We have other acknowledgments of the fact coming from still higher authority. There is a transaction of Mr. Gladstone, of Fasque, in Kincardineshire, of which I have an account in a paper in my pocket. Mr. Gladstone was applied to to reduce his rents, and he writes a letter to his agent telling him—and his confession is worth something, as coming from a prudent and sagacious merchant—telling him that he does not look at the alteration in the corn law as calculated to reduce prices, and that consequently he does not feel himself bound to reduce his rents. Now, this is a clear admission that the benefit from the law goes into the shape of rent. But this is not all. There is his Grace the Duke of Richmond. The other day he was visiting his tenants in Scotland, dining with them, and looking over his estates, and in one of his speeches he told them, whilst speaking of the alteration in the corn law, that he was not the man to hold his tenants to any bargain they had made under circumstances which had been altered, and that if they wished it he was willing that

they should throw up their leases and return their farms into his hands. Now, what does that amount to? Why, merely that the corn law influences the rent. It means that or nothing; although I must say such a speech shows very little care for the farmer, who perhaps a dozen years ago purchased stock and went into his farm, and is now told, when probably the price of his stock has fallen 40 per cent., that if he pleases he may sell off, leave his farm, retire from his connection with the noble Duke, and get another landlord where he may. All this shows, then, that if the corn law operates to cause a profit at all, it also operates to put that profit into the pockets of the landlord.

Now, do not suppose that I wish to deprive you of your rents; I wish you to have your rents; but what I say is, don't come here to raise them by legislative enactments. I think you may have as good rents without a corn law as with it; but what I say is this, that when you come here to raise the price of corn under the pretence of helping the farmer and the farm-labourer, whilst in reality you are only going to help yourselves, then, I say, you are neither dealing fairly by the farmer, nor yet by the country at large; and, mind me, this is just the position in which you stand with the country. You have deceived the farmers, and, feeling that you have deceived them, they have a right to ask, how you intend to benefit them? Nay, more, they have a right to inquire into your rentals, and find out how you have benefited yourselves. Yes, I say they have a right to inquire into your rentals. The honourable member for Sussex (Colonel Wyndham) laughs, and truly it would be laughable enough were he to come to me to inquire into the profits of my business; but, then, he should remember that I do not ask for a law to enhance the profits of my business. He, on the contrary, is the strenuous supporter of a law, which, in its effect—whatever may be its intention—benefits his own class and no other class whatever. This language, I dare say, is new to the House. I dare say it is strange and unexpected in this place; but it is

The corn laws and rents.

the language I am accustomed to use on this subject out-of-doors, and I do not wish to say anything behind your backs that I am not prepared to say before your faces.

And here let me ask what progress has been made in rents? Since 1793, rents in this country have doubled. I have returns in my pocket sent in by the clergy of Scotland, from which it appears that the rental of that country has increased in the same time threefold. In England, rents have not increased to that extent; but I can say with safety that they have more than doubled; and there is something beyond even this. You have had a considerable advance in rents since 1828. There has been a great rise since that year. I hold in my hand a return of the rents of the corporation lands of the city of Lincoln since 1828. I see the honourable member for Lincoln (Colonel Sibthorp) in his place. Now, I have a return of the property of the city corporation; and it is nearly all agricultural property, and I find that that rental has increased 50 per cent. since the year 1829. Now, I do not say that the whole rental of the kingdom has increased in the same proportion, but I do say that we have a right to inquire what is the increase in that rental. The honourable member for Lincoln says he won't tell me; but I will tell him that nothing is so easy to learn as the history of rents in this country, for there is scarcely a village in England in which there is not some old man who can tell what was the price of land in his parish through many succeeding years. I say it is the business of the farmer and the poor labourer to know the progress which rents have made since the corn law passed, and if they find that whilst in the one case they are losing all their capital, and in the other their condition is deteriorating, and they are obliged to put up with a potato diet—if they find, I say, that whilst this has been going on, rents have increased and are increasing, then, I contend, they will have a proof that this law was passed for the landlords, and that it operates for their benefit, and their benefit only.

I will now show you another view of the question. You have made the corn law the subject of political outcry in the

counties. You have made it a Church and State question, and at the same time you have made the farmers your stepping-stones to political power. And for what has this been done? I will take the last general election. At the last election the 'farmers' friends' were running through the country, and, with the purest and most disinterested intentions, no doubt, were making all sorts of promises to the agriculturists. Well, here are some of them, sitting in this House. Here they are, some of them sitting on the Treasury Bench. The right honourable baronet at the head of the Government (Sir R. Peel) made a speech at Tamworth as the 'farmers' friend.' The honourable member for Essex (Sir John Tyrell) says he quoted it repeatedly, but I don't think he quotes it now. As for the right honourable baronet, however, with all his ability, and with his thirty years' Parliamentary experience, he might probably have obtained the situation he now holds whatever might have been the circumstances of the time. The post was due to him, perhaps, for his talents; so of him I shall say no more just now. But there is another right honourable baronet very near him—I mean the Paymaster of the Forces (Sir E. Knatchbull). There is no disturbing force in him. The right honourable member is the 'farmers' friend.' There he sits. Oh, I was struck, the other night, at the fervour with which the honourable member for Wallingford (Mr. Blackstone) apostrophized this 'farmers' friend,' when, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, he said, 'O if the Paymaster of the Forces were himself again! A few years back, he would not have treated the farmer so.' [Question!] Ay, it is not a very pleasant one, certainly; but it is the question. I do not complain of the Paymaster of the Forces; I have no reason. He has made a speech which is more to the point, which is better calculated to serve the cause which I uphold than anything that has occurred in this debate, excepting, perhaps, his own explanation. I don't complain of him; I pass on. There is a noble Duke (Newcastle) who is a 'farmers' friend,' and he has a son (Lord Lincoln) in the

The 'farmers' friends.'

Woods and Forests. The noble lord, I dare say, performs his duty efficiently; but I want to show the farmers of England—of whom there is not one genuine specimen in this House—who they are who profit by this law. Well, then, there is a noble Duke (Buckingham) who is the 'farmers' friend' *par excellence.* He has reached the summit of rank already. He has no son requiring a place under Government. But one prize he had not, and that he soon obtained—I mean the blue riband. Now these are but the outward and visible signs of the gains of this triumph; but whilst all this patronage, and all these honours, have been showered on the 'farmers' friends,' what have the farmers got themselves? You think this is not the question; but I can tell you we have no hope of the salvation of the country but by showing the farmers how you have cajoled them. You taught the farmers to believe, that if they elected you, their 'friends,' to Parliament, you would speedily repay them for their trouble. They allowed themselves to be driven to the poll by their landlords, who raised this cry; they believed the landlords could keep up the price of corn by Act of Parliament. Will you now confess that you cannot? You have confessed by your silence that you cannot guarantee the farmer even 30*s.* a quarter. That delusion is at an end.

How is it, now, that the farmers cannot carry on their business without political intermeddling, like other people? 'Throw the land out of cultivation,' by removing the corn law! who say that? The worst farmers in the country,—the landlords, rather, of the worst-farmed land. Who tells us that the land will not be thrown out of cultivation? The landlords of the best-farmed land. I put one prophecy against the other. Let the question be decided, as other matters are, by competition. I object to your pretences for keeping up the price of corn. Those who are most rampant for protection are the landlords, I repeat, of the worst-farmed land—the members for Wilts, Dorset, Bucks, Somersetshire, and Devonshire—where you may see the worst farming in the kingdom; and why is it

so? Not because the tenants are inferior to those elsewhere—Englishmen are much the same anywhere; but the reason is, because they are under political landlords—men who will not give their tenants a tenure, but with a view to general elections. You say 'No,' but I will prove it. Go into the country yourselves, and where you find the best-farmed land there you will find the longest leases. The Lothians, Northumberland, Norfolk, Lincoln. [No.] What, no leases in Lincolnshire?

[Colonel SIBTHORP: Not long leases.]

Exactly; I mentioned Lincoln last, as being nearer south. Well, on the estates of the Duke of Northumberland, for example, you will find no long leases, and the worst farming; and you will find with long leases good farming, even in the midst of bad; and *vice versâ*. This is unpalatable, of course. Honourable gentlemen say it is not true. I ask them if they expect farmers to farm well without long leases? Can you really expect tenants to lay out capital in draining and improvements without long leases? I should feel insulted if anybody offered me a farm, expecting me to lay out money, without the security of a lease. What is the language of the farmers themselves? You must not treat them now as if they believed you the 'farmers' friends.' Did you hear the petition I presented from Dorsetshire, agreed to at a meeting of 3000 farmers and others, and signed by the chairman, a landholder, for the total repeal of the corn laws?

But this cannot be treated as a farmers' question. We shall have it put upon a proper footing from this very night. The corn law, if it does anything, raises rents. I do not come here to tell you it does so. I do not think you understand your own interests. But I know this, that you inflict the greatest possible amount of evil upon the manufacturing and commercial community, and do no good either to the farmer or the farmer's labourer. It may be a very unpalatable question; but what, I ask, are the terms which you wish to make, under the new law, with your tenants? I do not like the language I have heard upon the subject from landowners.

The right honourable baronet (Sir R. Peel) said, the protection had been reduced; but I have heard little talk, at least in public, about reducing rents. However, I have heard a great deal about the farmers 'improving and curtailing their expenses.' What says the member for Worcestershire (Mr. Barneby)?—

'I have been in Yorkshire, and the worst land there produces as much as the best in this country.'

What, again, was the language of a noble earl (Verulam) at St. Albans?—

'You must no longer sit before your doors, with your pipes in your mouths, and drinking your ale; but you must at once bestir yourselves.'

What said the member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles), who sometimes appears here in the character of the 'farmers' friend'?—that

'in Scotland they have double our crops, and that this might be secured in this country by improved husbandry.'

Now, this is not fair language on the part of landowners to farmers; for if protection be reduced, the farmers have a right to reduced rents; and if not, let us hear what is the intention of the corn law?

We have heard a great deal of ambiguous language during the debate from the right honourable vice-president of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone), but we have not yet heard what the corn law and the tariff have done. At one time, we hear an avowal of reduced prices; next (like putting forward one foot, and then withdrawing it, and advancing the other to erase the foot-trace), we hear that credit was not taken for that. This might not be intended, but it certainly is calculated to deceive the farmers. But the right honourable gentleman said, 'Whether the tariff has reduced prices or not, prices had been reduced, and there has been no reason to complain.' This sort of ambiguity is not the way now to deal

with the farmers. Gentlemen must not regard this as a battle between the farmers and the manufacturers. We propose to make good friends with the farmers. Yes; we are their best friends, their only friends, their best customers; and I can tell you this, they are beginning to be sick of the political landlords.

There is a small section of this House now setting themselves up as the real farmers' friends, upon the ruins of the old friendship: and I can say this, that so badly have they been treated, that they are now inclined to suspect even these new friends; and they say, 'What are they after? Don't you think they want to get up a party? Are they not wishing to make themselves troublesome to the Minister, that he may fancy it worth while to offer them something?' The farmers are now disposed to distrust everybody who promises them anything; and the reason they are ready to look on us with friendly eyes is, that we never promised them anything. We tell them distinctly that legislation can do nothing for them. It is a fraud. They must never allow bargaining for leases and rents to be mixed up with politics. They must deal with their landlords as with their wheelwrights and saddlers, with a view to business, and business alone.

I am fully aware that I have said more than may be quite agreeable to honourable gentlemen opposite. I think it is but fair to exculpate ourselves from the imputations that have been cast upon us by the right honourable gentleman (Sir R. Peel), and the vice-president of the Board of Trade, that we are seeking a monopoly for ourselves, as well as to deprive others of their monopoly. But what I have to say is this—we want no monopoly; and this I know, that the moment I go amongst the farmers, and say we are for free trade in coffee, in sugar, in manufactures, in everything, that the farmers, like honest and just men as they are, will at once exclaim, 'That is right, that is fair!' Now, I not only say this, but I complain of something else. There was a singular evasion of the question by the right

The question of revenue from customs duties.

honourable baronet (Sir R. Peel) when he talked of colonial manufactures and colonial produce, and mixed them up with the corn question. But what we want is a free trade in everything. The policy of the right honourable gentleman amalgamated duties for the purposes of protection, and duties for the purposes of revenue, and he would have it believed that we could not carry free trade without interfering with the custom-house duties. Now, we do not want to touch her Majesty at all by what we do. We do not want to touch duties simply for revenue; but we want to prevent certain parties from having a revenue which is of benefit to themselves, but advantage to none else. On the contrary, what we seek for is the improvement of her Majesty's revenue; what we wish to gain is that improvement. We say that your monopoly gives you a temporary advantage—a temporary, not a permanent advantage—and that you thereby cripple the resources of the revenue.

What is the amount of all these protecting duties? This morning I went through the whole of those revenue returns, and how much do you think they amounted to? To two millions per annum, and this included the timber duties, and every other article to which you for your own views give protection. This is the entire question. What is, I ask, the difficulty of abolishing protecting duties on manufactures? How much do they produce to the Customs? Less than £350,000 a-year. Then the right honourable gentleman has spoken of the cotton trade. How much is paid, think you, for the protection of cotton goods? By the last returns, £8150 a-year. There is no difficulty in a Prime Minister, in a Minister of capacious mind, of enlarged views, of one whose genius leads him to deal with something better than caviare and other trifling articles. Such a minister would, I say, find no difficulty in sweeping away the protecting duties.

Then the right honourable gentleman spoke of subverting the whole of our colonial system. What does he mean by subverting the whole of our colonial system? We do profess

to subvert the colonial monopolies. It is true that we would do that; but that is not subverting the colonial system. What we would do must benefit the revenue, and not injure. The equalization of the duty on sugar would increase the revenue, as it has been proved by Mr. M'Gregor, to an amount of not less than £3,000,000 a-year. Take away the monopoly, and you benefit the revenue. You might, too, do the same with coffee. You might increase the revenue to the amount of £300,000 a-year by the equalization of the duty on coffee. Would it be an injury to the colonies that you left them to all the enjoyments of a free trade? Where is the value of our possessions, if they are not able to supply us with articles as cheap and as good as come from other countries? They pay us the same price for our cotton as other countries, and no more. If they cannot supply us with sugar, surely they can supply us with something else.

Colonial preferences.

There can, then, be no difficulty in the way of the Exchequer which need prevent you from carrying the principle of free trade. I want the Anti-Corn-Law League to be known as the Free-Trade League. I know that honourable gentlemen opposite think that all we want to do is to take away the corn monopoly. The public mind is urged on by us against that key-stone in the arch of monopoly; but I can tell honourable gentlemen opposite, that that organization never will be dispersed until there is a total abrogation of every monopoly. There has been a great deal of talk of free trade being theoretically and in the abstract right. Does the right honourable gentleman know what that would lead to? If free trade be theoretically right—if it is as old as truth itself, why is it not applicable to the state and circumstances of this country? What! truth not applicable! then there must be something very false in your system, if truth cannot harmonize with it. Our object is to make you conform to truth, by making you dispense with your monopolies, and bringing your legislation within the bounds of justice. I thank you for the admission that we have a true cause, and, armed

The application of free trade.

with the truth of that cause, I appeal to the friends of humanity, I appeal to those on the other side who profess and practise benevolence, I appeal to certain members on the other side of the House, and I appeal especially to a certain noble lord (Lord Ashley), and I ask him, can he carry out his schemes of benevolence if he votes for any restriction on the supply of the people's food? If he should vote against the present motion, I ask him, will not he and his friends be viewed with suspicion in the manufacturing districts?

We often hear a great deal about charity, but what have we to do with charity? Yes, I say, what have we to do with charity in this House? The people ask for justice, and not charity. We are bound to deal out justice; how can charity be dealt out to an entire nation? Where a nation are the recipients, it is difficult to imagine who can be the donors. I, therefore, exhort the advocates of religion, the advocates of education, the friends of moral and physical improvement, to reflect upon the vote, which they are about to give. I ask, what will the country say if such members, patching up a measure of detail, are found voting in the approaching division against the motion of the honourable member for Wolverhampton? I call upon them, therefore, to separate themselves from those with whom they are accustomed to act, unless they are prepared to lose all the influence which they have laboured so hard to acquire in the manufacturing districts. I call upon them to support the present measure if they hope to be useful.

Justice not charity.

There are 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 people without wheaten bread. If the people continue to descend in the scale of physical comfort, and to eat potatoes, the hope of moral improvement which the friends of humanity indulge must be altogether disappointed. The right honourable gentleman, the vice-president of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone), said that the importation of 600,000 quarters of wheat would be a national calamity; but how otherwise are the people to be supported? The Poor Law Commissioners told them that

they must add a county as large as Warwick to the territorial extent of the country, or the population of the land must descend to a lower scale of food. They will go on multiplying; no scheme has yet been devised to stop that. You have attempted to bring down the population to the supply; but the evil which you sought to inflict upon them has recoiled upon yourselves.

I have now a word to say to the noble lord (J. Russell), the member for London. The noble lord will not vote for this motion; he says he objects to the repeal of the Corn Laws, but prefers a fixed duty to the sliding-scale. Now, I think the noble lord has not treated the great party on this side of the House, nor the country, well, in not stating explicitly the grounds on which he would retain any portion of this obnoxious law. He talked of the exclusive burdens to which he said the land was subject; but he did not specify those burdens. I have the greatest respect for the noble lord, but I venture to tell him that I think it is due to his own reputation, and to the party which acknowledges him for its leader, that he should distinctly state the grounds on which he advocates the imposition of a duty on the importation of corn. As far as I know, the feeling out-of-doors, whatever may be the fate of the motion, however small the numbers in its favour may be, it will not have the slightest effect upon the progress of public opinion on the question. The league will go on as they have hitherto done. In the course of our agitation we may probably dissolve Parliaments and destroy Ministries, but still public opinion upon the subject cannot be checked by the division, whatever it may be, and, if there be any force in truth and justice, we shall go on to an ultimate and not distant triumph.

V.—REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS

On Thursday, 28th September, 1843, the Anti-Corn-Law League held its first monthly meeting in Covent Garden Theatre; and, as the *League* newspaper informs us, 'the vast space was crowded in every corner half an hour before the time for commencing the business' (at 7 p.m.). A report was read, detailing the operations of the League, and stating that the subscriptions exceeded £50,000. Over nine million tracts and stamped publications had been distributed during the year, and 651 lectures delivered under the auspices of the League. The report—moved by Mr. Heyworth, and seconded by Mr. Scholefield, M.P.—was adopted. Mr. Cobden moved 'an address of the Council of the National Anti-Corn-Law League to the people of the United Kingdom.' It is recorded that when Mr. Cobden declared that the League would trust to its lecturers and its newspapers, and would no more petition the House of Commons, the vast audience rose and cheered for several minutes. In this address the League's plan of agitation was explained, and contributions to the extent of £100,000 invited for the ensuing year. In the course of his speech Mr. Cobden explained the object of the League as follows: 'The single and undisguised object of the League is to put down commercial monopoly; but that cannot be done by saddling upon our backs a fixed duty on corn, which means a differential duty on sugar, on coffee, and monopoly in every other article. The Corn Law is the great tree of Monopoly, under whose baneful shadow every other restriction exists. Cut it down by the roots, and it will destroy the others in its fall. The sole object of the League is to put an end to and extinguish at once, and for ever, the principle of maintaining taxes for the benefit of a particular class. The object is to make the revenue what it ought to be—a stream flowing into the Queen's Exchequer, and not a penny of it intercepted by the Duke of Buckingham, or Sir E. Knatchbull, to pay off their endowments or their settlements; by Lord Mountcashel to discharge his burthens or his mortgages; or by any other person, or for the maintenance of any object whatsoever.' The address, having been seconded by Mr. Bright, was spoken to as follows by Mr. W. J. Fox.

In the able speeches of the mover and seconder of the address two points have been slightly passed over, or only incidentally mentioned, which I think tend very much to recommend that address to the adoption of the public, and the objects of its authors to their co-operation. One characteristic feature of the address is the plainness and frankness with which the plans of the League are told out. There are no claims of implicit confidence; there are no ambiguous promises; there is no endeavour to lead on the people towards results not specified; there is no saying, like a certain state physician, 'Let me into office, give me the fee, and then you shall see my prescription;' but a succession of measures are distinctly marked out, all tending towards a definite point, which point gained, the objects of the League must needs be accomplished, and towards which a movement is made as distinct, and, I apprehend—as these measures in succession are realized—as resistless, as the great operations of nature. They conduct us towards a result which no administration can resist, which no law can stand, to that declaration of the will of the possessors of the political power of a great empire, which must be respected by all who aspire to administer its affairs, which cannot be resisted but in the dissolution of society, and before which any opposing power, any law, any institution even, however time-honoured, must pass away, as the leaves fall before the winds of autumn, or as snow vanishes in the sunshine of spring. And the men who propose this course of measures are plainly as honest as they are earnest in that for which they ask your co-operation. They make, themselves, the largest sacrifices that are made; and the very fact which has been thrown in their teeth, that they have an interest in this object, is their best justification. The interests of honest industry are surely one of the objects of the policy of a great empire. They have an interest in it; so have you; so have we all. Who that lives by eating bread has not an interest in the repeal of the bread tax? Who that is endeavouring to support himself and his family by commerce

The league's certainty of success.

has not an interest in Free Trade? Who has not an interest in what advances the general prosperity of the country, even though his pursuits are artistical or intellectual, ministering to the spiritual rather than the material portions of our nature? For as one thrives will all thrive—they react the one upon the other—the starving do not encourage literature and art—they are bound together by the ties which Providence formed to uphold society; and it is because they and we have an interest in this matter that we are determined the question shall not drop until it is satisfactorily settled.

I say all classes have an interest in this matter; even they who are represented as the great opposing class—the landlord class. For what has made England the paradise of landowners but its being the workshop of the world? In the progress of manufacture, if machinery has enabled one man to do the work of two hundred, it has also employed two hundred, and two thousand, where one was employed; all bread eaters, coming to the landowner for his produce. And while the manufacturers of this country have been thus advancing in the last century, its growth of wheat has been tripled, and the rents of the farmers have been in many cases quadrupled. The landlords gain by railways enhancing the worth of their property; they gain by the rich and flourishing community arising around them; and if for a while they should have to make some slight sacrifice—if at first their rents should fall in the change—why, they will still be gaining that which gold could never buy. By the graceful concession they would be gaining the goodwill and gratitude of their fellow-countrymen; they would gain for themselves an exemption from the execration that pursues their class—from the infamy of their names in history—from the reprobation of their consciences, and the pollution of their souls.

The confidence which the Council expresses in the successful operations of the measures they trace out is, I think, a well-founded one. For when have recognized principles failed of meeting with success—when in the world's history?

Some affect to sneer at abstract principles; but abstract good is the real, practical good, after all; the exceptions made to it are some little, dirty contrivances of those who would have trade free for others, but would reserve the monopoly for themselves—would have free trade as to what they buy, but restrictions as to what they sell; and who tell us that those principles are sound and excellent things in reference to all other commodities whatever, but that there is some one exception left—the exception of that in which the exceptor deals; and each in turn will tell you that Free Trade is the noblest thing in the world, except for corn, except for sugar, except for coffee, and except for this, that, and the other, till once, even in the House of Commons, it came to an exception of second-hand glass bottles. I say this is a principle recognized by all—recognized even by the Government in its measures of last year, however paltry their nature and limited their operation; recognized in their Canada Corn Bill; recognized in the repeal of the laws against the exportation of machinery, the last rag of that form of monopoly; and the repeal of the duties on imports must follow that of restriction on exports. A principle thus practically recognized by foes, as well as by friends, is certain of success. Thus was it that the great principle of Negro liberty was recognized, and thus eventually carried. And did not the recognition of a principle emancipate the Roman Catholics of Ireland? Ask Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington whether this was not the secret of the success of that measure.

I say this anticipation of triumph is well founded. For have we not the eternal power of truth? have we not the agency of a press that cannot be restricted in its advocacy of such principles? Have we not meetings like these—not only such meetings as these, but meetings held in the rural districts, where the opposing class is challenged to the combat? and have we not that power to which the address specially points, which with great propriety is introduced on such an occasion as this, that power which has ever been the

cradle and is the bulwark of liberty, political and commercial —the power of great cities, the agency of civilization?—of great towns and cities, that first reared their towers as landmarks when the deluge of barbarism in the middle ages was beginning to subside; that in the civil wars of this country afforded the serf a refuge from his baronial oppressor, and gave him food and gave him freedom; towns and cities, that won the rudiments of representation, that formed our parliaments, that asserted the people's power of self-taxation, that gained one step after another in the progress of order and of human rights and enjoyments; where commerce throve, where the arts have flourished, where the poor serfs of the soil, that vainly struggled and shed their blood in the Jack Cade and Wat Tyler insurrections, at length had their emancipation achieved for them. In cities flourish luxuries and arts which make it life to live. Cities are the heralds of progress, as they have been the safeguards of the past; there congregated multitudes shout for justice, and demand that the oppressed shall be emancipated, raising a cry at the sight of wrong which reverberates from earth to heaven, and makes the oppressive class, however strong in station and in power, quail as before the thunder of the day of retribution.

The towns and cities.

And this is the second point in the address upon which I wish to fix your attention—the importance that it assigns to towns and cities. It looks to them as the machinery by which this great question is to be wrought out to its final, satisfactory, and triumphant decision. And well and rightly does it so, because it is in towns and cities that the wrong most deeply exists which it is the aim of the League in its noblest efforts to redress. It is in cities that the pressure is felt most extensively—that the iron enters most deeply into the soul. It is not merely in the expression and feeling of such an assemblage as this that I read the condemnation of the laws that uphold monopoly; it is in what you know—it is in what leads you here. It is something, it is much to many

here in this vast and brilliant assemblage, that from day to day the pressure upon their circumstances is rendered more and more hard by the artificial limitations of trade; it is something, it is much to many here, that from time to time one hostile tariff after another makes its appearance, shutting us out of markets on the Continent which had been open; it is something, it is much to many here, that in the most frequented thoroughfares of this great metropolis house after house should be shut up, exhibiting a spectacle of desolation where once were thriving tradesmen and enjoying families; it is something, it is much to many here, that the pressure comes at each extremity, that the candle is burning at both ends—on one side they are exhausted by paying to the relief of the poor, and on the other side they are plundered by claims upon them for the income tax; it is something, it is much to many here, that through every station, in every rank of life, the pressure is felt—the demon seems to be omnipresent, and they cannot escape his pestiferous influence. But even this is not the deadliest evil of the corn laws. Did one want to exhibit it in this great theatre, it might be done; not by calling together such an audience as I now see here, but by going into the by-places, the alleys, the dark courts, the garrets and cellars of this metropolis, and by bringing thence their wretched and famished inmates. Oh, we might crowd them here, boxes, pit, and galleries, with their shrunk and shrivelled forms, with their wan and pallid cheeks, with their distressful looks, perhaps with dark and bitter passions pictured in their countenances, and thus exhibit a scene that would appal the stoutest heart, and melt the hardest; a scene that we would wish to bring the prime minister of the country upon the stage to see; and we would say to him, 'There, delegate of majesty! leader of legislators, conservator of institutions, look upon that mass of misery! That is what your laws and power, if they did not create, have failed to prevent, have failed to cure or mitigate.' And supposing this to be done, could this scene be realized, we

know what would be said. We should be told, that 'there has always been poverty in the world; that there are numerous ills that laws can neither make nor cure; that whatever is done, much distress must exist.' He might say, 'It is the mysterious dispensation of Providence, and there we must leave it.' 'Hypocrite, hypocrite!' I would say to him, 'urge not that plea yet; you have no right to it. Strike off every fetter upon industry; take the last grain of the poison of monopoly out of the cup of poverty; give labour its full rights; throw open the markets of the world to an industrious people; and then, if after all there be poverty, you have earned your right to qualify for the unenviable dignity of a blasphemer of Providence; but until then, while any restriction whatever exists, while any impediment is raised to the well-being of the many for the sordid profit of the few—till then you cannot, you dare not, look this gaunt spectre of wretchedness in the face and exclaim, "Thou canst not say I did it."'

Why, the corn laws and the policy of our agricultural legislators hunt poverty and wretchedness from their own districts into ours. The landlord class call themselves feeders of the people. They speak of their ability, if properly encouraged and protected, to feed the nation. What feeds the people? Not the growing of corn, but the people being able to buy it. The people are no more fed, for all the wheat that is grown, than as if there were so many stones covering the rich valleys of the country. It is in the price required of the people who eat it; and if that is beyond the power of the multitude to give, the landlords become starvers instead of feeders of the people. Agriculture cannot support its own population; it is not in the course of nature that it should, for one man is vested with the ability to raise food for the many. Twenty-eight per cent. of the population are amply sufficient to cultivate the ground so as to yield food for the remainder of the hundred. How are the rest to be fed? By opening markets for the products of their industry, that they may obtain the means.

A retort to the agricultural landlords.

In the natural growth of the population in the rural districts they find a superfluous population—that superfluity is continually on the increase. People talk much about machinery throwing hands out of employment; these very same people raise a cry of the evil results of corn-law repeal in throwing the cultivators of the ground out of employ. Why, are they not themselves throwing them out of employ every day? Have we not the Royal Agricultural Society and local agricultural societies all over the country, where premiums are offered of from £3 to £50, from £50 to £100, for the invention of machines to cheapen the tillage of the ground—to do that by mechanical ingenuity which had heretofore been wrought by human labour? Are there not machines for every process and operation?—machines for preparing and draining the ground for the reception of the seed, machines for ploughing and sowing, machines even for the splitting the beans that the cattle eat, machinery for reaping the produce, for thrashing the wheat, and for cutting the chaff—is there not machinery from the beginning to the end?—is there not mechanical power, chemical power, horse power, steam power?—and, what perverts it all, and lies at the back of all of the abuse, political power. These associations come forth with their splendid array of great names—some men who figure in one house and some who figure in another; some who are chiefly known as politicians, and others as warriors, until we find among them that great name whose judgment in machinery relates more to the sword than the plough, and who best understands the machinery by which battalions are mowed down, and the harvest of carnage is gathered in. And there is this remarkable difference between the employment of machinery in the one case and in the other, in which it has been so often assailed. When machinery is employed in manufacture, what is the natural result? Production is cheaper, goods, apparel of various kinds, are brought to market at a lower rate. The use of it is diffused more extensively in society; people have enjoyments and accommodation which they did not possess;

the demand has increased, and this again reacts upon production; more hands are employed, and in the natural course of things there is found to be more work, more wages, and more enjoyment. But in the employment of agricultural machinery, the intention of the corn law is not to let those inventions affect the price—not to let them cheapen corn and to extend the enjoyment of wholesome food, but to keep up the price while the cost of production is cheapened, in order that the surplus may go into that great swamp of all, the receptacle of rent, still crying, 'Give, give,' and never satisfied.

Well, in this way there is more of the surplus population who go on in the natural course of wretchedness, who fall from one stage to another, in the agricultural districts than anywhere else. Up they troop to some great town; they come, men, women, and children; they toil their way along the hard roads, and then, without friends or help, they look around them, they ask for work, they ask for alms: they endeavour in vain to find that for which they are seeking, for monopoly has been there beforehand; having driven them out of the country, it bars the occasion for their employment in the towns, and so they are beaten and battered from pillar to post; they have, perhaps, to incur the frown of power by some irregular attempt to support themselves, for the police hunt and hound them for endeavouring to sell apples or lucifers in the streets; they are sent to the station-house, they are brought out of that to be committed to gaol; they go in beggars, they come out thieves; they pass through various stages of disease in the only factory into which they can get—in those great factories of typhus which abound in large towns. One union workhouse sends them to another, the overseers send them to the magistrates, and the magistrates send them back to the overseers; and at last, in this hopeless and heartless strife, they drop by the way. Death completes what monopoly began; and we, inhabitants of great towns, know that all this is passing around us, and we are quiet and acquiescing, and

conscience never demands, 'Are not you accessory to these murders?'

Wisely has the Council appealed to the great towns, for there is the power. What can the poor farmer do? His money is in his landlord's ground, and the man who has money in another man's ground must needs be a slave. His freedom is buried there with it, not, like the grain, to germinate, but only to rot and dissolve in corruption. It is where great bodies are congregated that they can stand by one another; where not the importance of the individual, but the importance of the many, is the great thing for all. And how independent are such places, if they but knew their position, of all that aristocracy is, or can do! Landlords! They built not this magnificent metropolis; they covered not these forty square miles with the great mass of human dwellings that spread over them; they crowd not our ports with shipping; they filled not your city with its monuments of science and art, with its institutions of literature and its temples of religion; they poured not that stream of commercial prosperity into the country which during the last century has made the grandeur of London, quadrupling its population, and showing that it has one heart with the entire community. They! Why, if they were to spend—if you could impose on them the laws which they would impose upon you, and they were bound to spend—in this metropolis all they received in their rents; if there were no toleration for French wines or foreign luxuries; if they were prohibited from storing and locking up in their remote galleries works of art, real or pretended, which they prize as property; if here, amongst the shopkeepers of London, they were bound to spend that which they had obtained by their rents—it would be wretched repayment to you for what you have forfeited by the absence of free trade. It is, as it were, to make war upon towns and cities, to cut off their supplies of food, to limit their resources, to levy upon them other taxation; for, in the vast spread of this metropolis, where there are nearly two

An appeal to London.

millions of inhabitants, probably not less than six or eight millions sterling is wrung from your resources in different ways, not going into the pockets of the landlords, but being lost by the way, a great portion of it, in order that their extortion may keep up a veil on its horrid countenance, and have something of the show of legitimate taxation, instead of being apparent and downright plunder.

The time is opportune for the appeal which has been made to the inhabitants of this metropolis, and for the appeal to those among you who enjoy the franchise of the city of London. There will, in a very short period, be an opportunity for you to show decidedly that the principle of Free Trade is consecrated in your hearts and guides your votes. I trust the contest will be by no means a personal one, but one wholly of principle, and that no ambiguous pretensions, no praise of Free Trade, with certain qualifications and accommodations necessary to the hustings, will be tolerated for an instant; but that the plain and simple test will be the complete, total, and immediate abolition of the monopoly of food. I know not why one should hesitate to say, upon such an occasion as this, that the placards which I see round about this theatre express the feeling and preference that I think may be honestly entertained for Mr. Pattison as the representative of that great city.[1] . . . Here, then, I hope, will one of the first great electoral experiments be tried, that not merely every member of the League, but every inhabitant of London, who can honourably influence the result of that election, should feel himself bound to do so, as amongst his earliest pledges of adherence to this great cause—the commencement of his answer to the appeal which has now been made to him for support. Other ways will soon open themselves; and I trust that its past backwardness will be amply redeemed by the metropolis in the readiness with which it will respond to

[1] A vacancy in the City of London was occasioned by the death of Sir Matthew Wood: the candidates were Mr. Pattison and Mr. Thomas Baring. The former was elected by a majority of 165.

the great call now made for its pecuniary liberality, and in the ardour which many will manifest in other modes of co-operating in this great work, showing that we look to yet higher principles and considerations than any that belong either to rural districts or to particular classes, and that we regard this as the common cause of humanity. And so it is; for Free-Trade principles are the dictates of Nature plainly written on the surface of land and ocean, so that the simplest may read them and imbibe their spirit. For that Power which stretched abroad the land, poured forth the ocean, and piled up the mountains; that Power which gave Western America its broad prairies, and reared the gigantic and boundless forests of the north; that Power which covered with rich vineyards the smiling hills of France, which wafts sweet odours from the 'spicy shores of Araby the blest,' which has endowed this country with its minerals and its insular advantages, and its people with their indomitable Saxon energy, with their skill, their hardihood, their perseverance, their enterprise;—that Power which doth all this, evidently designed it for the common good, for the reciprocal advantage of all; it intended that all should enrich all by the freest interchange, thus making the world no longer the patrimony of a class, but the heritage and the paradise of humanity.

VI.—THE CORN LAWS AND COMPROMISE

In this splendid oration delivered at a crowded meeting in Covent Garden Theatre on January 25th, 1844, Fox sounds the note of determination and triumph. The Manchester School refuses to accept the favourite Whig remedy of a fixed duty. George Wilson, who was in the chair, announced that in future meetings of the League in London would be held every week instead of every month.

I HAVE to address you in the first meeting of a new year of agitation, at a time when confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty are prevailing through the country—when the legislature is expected shortly to meet—when the people look on rather with sullen expectancy than with any degree of hopefulness—when the League has gone on marshalling its strength, augmenting its funds, and multiplying its numbers—when political parties are on the look-out to see what chance may turn up for retaining their position, or for getting into the position of their adversaries when *Anti-League* associations are forming in different counties—and when, therefore, it is appropriate and desirable to reiterate, in terms that have been often heard, but cannot be too frequently repeated—to reiterate the League principle—the one aim and object of this association, that for which we are banded together—without which we will never be content; till we attain which our organization and exertions will continue—the one broad, simple principle of Free Trade; and, as applied to the greatest practical case, the total, the immediate, and the unconditional abolition of the corn laws.

No compromise to be entertained.

That is the star by which we steer; to that single point we bear right on, heedless of all other considerations. We care not for parties; we care not for demarcations of faction, new or old; we care not for the consistencies or inconsistencies of this or that leader

of any portion of the House of Commons—the total, the unconditional, and the immediate abolition of the corn laws is what we ask, and all we ask. We require no more, we will take no less, from Sir Robert Peel on the one side, or Lord John Russell on the other. We ask no more, and we will take no less, from Lord Melbourne on the one side, and the Duke of Wellington on the other—or from my Lord Brougham on all sides. We wage no further warfare with those who concede this principle; we wage everlasting warfare with all who will not grant it; and because it *is* a principle, in our own minds it admits of no compromise whatever. That is our watchword. If a certain class in the country reiterates the cry, 'No surrender,' we reply by 'No compromise.' If this movement were what it has been sometimes mistakenly represented—if it were a mere manufacturers' combination—if it endeavoured to put certain portions of the trade and commerce of this country on a different, a safer, and more profitable footing, and this were all—if this were a mere party movement, an action of hostility towards one set of politicians, and an endeavour to introduce into their place another set of politicians, —if this movement were a class feeling—if we really did the absurd thing that has been ascribed to us in the published resolutions of societies—if we hated agriculture—an inconceivable absurdity! for how can any man hate that without which he gets no bread to eat?—or if this were a mere popular or a mere cuckoo cry, set up by individuals for their own personal aggrandizement, or for political ends, like 'No Popery,' and similar cries that have so often led multitudes astray, and wrought confusion in the country, why, then there might be compromise in the matter. But we say it is 'the very stuff o' the conscience;' it is a principle upon which we have made up our minds as embracing the right of man anterior to the existence of civilized society; for if anything can be called a natural right, it is that of man's exchanging the produce of his honest labour freely in the world's markets for whatever he may desire which may

be most welcome to him, ministering to his existence or enjoyment.

This is not a question that admits of degrees; it is not a thing to be settled piecemeal. We respect all rights; but we have no respect for wrongs. We understand not the doctrine of tolerating a certain portion of robbery, iniquity, and oppression upon the community, and on individuals. We take up our position on the *right* and the *wrong* of the case—for property of all sorts, as realized by human skill and labour, and as sanctioned by human laws and institutions. We avow our respect for, and we hold in sacred veneration, the property of the class which has most opposed itself to our claims: the broad acres of the landowner are his; we mean not to touch them—we set up no scramble for their division. We interfere not with his regulation of that which, by inheritance or by purchase, belongs to him. Let him do as he will with his own; he is amenable to opinion if he violates decency and morality; but so far as he keeps within the limits which the great objects of human society prescribe, we respect his rights even there. Let him have his game, or let him decimate his hares and rabbits; let him grant leases or refuse them; let him cut down the ancient timber on his estate to put cash into his pocket, or let him have a great respect for, and be conservative of, timber and institutions. We meddle with nothing whatever of this; let him have his whole rights. The land is his; the produce of the land is his, or theirs to whom he hires out that land; but there is one thing which is not his, and that is, the industry of other people, their labour, their skill, their perseverance, their bones and sinews, their daily toil; and the bread which they earn by that toil and work he has no right to diminish by taxation. They are his fellow-countrymen, and not his slaves.

Property and labour.

The labourer's bones and muscles are his own property, and not the landlord's. We claim for ourselves that which we concede to him—the fair produce of whatever power,

privileges, or advantages we possess. Here our principle claims the same respect, the same sacred veneration, for the rights of property of the man who has nothing in the world but the physical strength with which he goes forth in the morning to earn his dinner at noon, and that of the inheritor of the widest and most princely domain which can be boasted of in this country of Great Britain. And in our regard for this principle, we are opposed, not only to the protectionist form of invasion of the industrious man's property, but to any other mode or plan of invasion of that property which might be substituted by any other parties or for any other purpose. Our principle is as opposed to a fixed duty as it is opposed to a sliding scale. The one is as much an invasion of the common rights of the people as is the other; for what is its tendency, under whatever pretext it can be levied? There is no doubt that any duty on the importation of corn must enhance the price of food; and whatever enhances the price of food takes away from the fair earnings of the industrious.

The proposal to substitute a fixed duty for a sliding scale.

When we call to mind the condition of great multitudes of the industrious classes—when we think how they rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness—by what miserable and wearing toil their poor pittance is won from the world—when we remember how many there are the whole history of whose lives is summed up in the well-known verse—

> 'Work, work, work,
> Till the eyes be red and dim;
> Work, work, work,
> Till the brain begins to swim,'—

when we look on such a destiny as this, if a fixed duty would take but a farthing out of the pound, we say it should not be taken off their pittance to augment the stores of the Dukes of Buckingham and Richmond, or any other landlord. Why, there are cases in which the imposition of a fixed duty on corn, whatever the amount, would lead to more objectionable results, perhaps, than those which belong to the sliding-scale.

It has been often urged, and I believe it has been felt as an objection, 'What will you do with your fixed duty, your 10*s.*, your 8*s.*, or your 5*s.*—what will you do with it when the price of food rises, as at times it does rise, to a famine price?' And it has been replied, 'Then it must be relaxed.' And what power shall determine the relaxation, and by what test? Only realize in your imagination, for a moment, the condition of a prime minister who has to watch the country to see whether the time is come, or coming, at which the fixed duty on corn must be relaxed by a special interposition of the Government, because food is reaching a famine price! He must note in the papers how many are picked up fainting in the streets from want of food; how many cases of starvation will prove that bread has risen to the price at which the relaxation must take place; what amount of disease, how much typhus, will be a justification of the relaxation of that duty. These are the inquiries a prime minister must make in such a case. He must watch the country, and feel its pulsation, as the regimental surgeon stands by when a soldier is flogged—finger on wrist, eye on the bleeding wound, ear upon the sound of the cat on the bare back, with a stop-watch noting whether the instant has yet arrived when he is to interpose and say, 'Hold, enough!' Is this a fitting position for the chief of the legitimate Government of a free nation?

One violation of justice always leads to another. Forget justice, and charity will not long be remembered, and humanity will cry in vain. A fixed duty! It is only protection under another name; and 'protection' is the very thing against which this League wages warfare, which it exists to put down and annihilate for ever. We have no more charity for protection in this form than in another. What is it? 'The protection of agriculture.' What portion of agriculture? What class of persons? Strip it of devices and sophisms and circumlocutions, it is the protection of rent, and nothing else. The protection of the farmer! The tenant farmer! has it ever enriched him? The

Protection is protection of rent.

protection of the labourer! what has been his history for many a year past? He has been protected downwards from one stage to another of descent; protected out of his old clothes into rags; protected out of his cottage into a ruined hovel, with but one filthy room in it for wife and family all to pig together. He has been protected till his wife and children are so ragged that they cannot go to church for the rites of religion. He is protected out of the field into the union workhouse, or perhaps into a court of justice, or a gaol; and at last he is protected into that narrow home,

> 'Where the wicked cease from troubling,
> And the weary are at rest,'

finding in the cold shelter of the grave more reality of protection than he ever got from the corn laws.

Protection! Why, what should we protect? Not a losing trade, for that is taxing all the community for the advantage of a class; that is, pursuing an object that cannot repay the labourer. Not a thriving trade, for that needs no protection. And why should any one class be singled out? What is there in the condition of the recipient of rents that he is to be protected at the expense of all the rest of the community? Why not protect the philosopher, the artist, the poet? What can protection do for them, or for anything that is intrinsically valuable? There was a poet born this day—some Scotchmen here will immediately remember to whom I refer, for many are engaged elsewhere in celebrating the birthday of Robert Burns. Nature made Burns a poet, and aristocratic protection made him an exciseman. But the protection he most desired was that which his own stout heart and strong arm could give him. He was a man who would not humble himself in the dust before an aristocrat. He could adopt such language as this in reference to servility—

> 'For me, sae low I need nae bow,
> For the Lord be thankit I can plough;
> When I downa yoke a naig,
> Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg.'

And the independence of the beggar was with him, and is, in reality, a more desirable thing than that pecuniary independence which is obtained by plundering others of their rights and their means of subsistence. It was justly said by an honourable gentleman who preceded me—If it be considered as a question of *revenue*, what is there in the world from which a revenue ought not sooner to be derived than from human food? Tax anything but that! But revenue is mere pretext in the case. In fact, the operation of these laws is full of petty juggling: some saying 'revenue' when they mean 'protection,' others saying 'protection' when they mean 'revenue.'

Sir Robert Peel contrived, in the first year of his tariff, to realize a duty of eight shillings a quarter on corn—three shillings a quarter more than it had ever before brought to the country. Those who are crying out that this is a question of revenue are only leading us by a roundabout way towards the same object—the putting money into the pockets of a class derived from the earnings of the rest of the community. But it is not the less an invasion of their rights, though the circuitousness of the method obscures and mystifies the process. They draw it silently and unobservedly, as they think, on account of this roundabout way of getting at it. But, after all, there it is! They are like the dishonest churchwarden who carried round the plate for the sacrament money for the poor, and who, upon such occasions, always took care to put sawdust in his pockets, that a few shillings might drop in without jingling. The corn laws are the landowners' sawdust; but the money goes not in a less quantity because its abstraction is more noiseless in the way of robbery by Act of Parliament than in any other irregular abstraction of property. With such men and such dealings as these we make no compromise.

Indeed, why should the League compromise now? 'Compromise' is not exactly the word that belongs to our present position. If we dreamed not of it when we were weak, we are not likely to listen to it now that we are strong; if it was not

our word when we were but few, it is little likely to be so now we are many. Allow me to say, that you in London scarcely imagine at present what the strength of the League is. It would be worth your while to send a deputation down into the North, there to mark and observe the nature of that strength; its progressiveness and its intensity. You should see the multitudes flocking together in those districts, men, women, and children, persons of all ranks and classes, as to a work that called forth the deepest sympathies of human nature. Yes, you should see them coming and mingling together in the same assembly —masters and men pouring out from the same factories. There is no heed paid there to the calumnies and stories which are circulated in some quarters; there are no symptoms there of the tyranny which has been talked of elsewhere. Whether it exists in other cases I know not; it certainly does not in the towns I have visited, and where I have seen this question agitated; but there come the operatives from the factories, not choked with 'devil's dust,' as Mr. Ferrand says, but ready to 'down with their own *dust*' in the cause; contributing, and that largely; women bringing their portion, and showing that they feel that it is indeed a woman's part to help the helpless, to sympathize with the oppressed, to relieve the struggling; old and young combining, the very children feeling, as it were, an atmosphere of patriotic exertion, and having a presentiment that in times to come, when the victory of Free Trade shall be gained, and men will look back upon it as a matter of history and glorious achievement, that they, too, will have pride in saying, 'I, also, was a repealer in my infancy!' Could you see the spirit with which they are animated, the enthusiasm that pervades their meetings, you would feel that indeed the death-doom of monopoly was sealed; and whenever London shall take its proper position, when the feeling in the provinces shall be proportionately responded to here, when you meet with their religious principle in this matter, when you meet with their pecuniary liberality in this great cause, when

Strength of the League —no compromise.

you are animated with this firm determination, why, then the work *is* accomplished, and these laws will be totally and finally abolished.

Not but that compromise would be as remote from the thoughts of the leaders of the League if they were alone in this great struggle. This was manifest from the spirit of the seven men at the meeting in Manchester several years ago, when they banded themselves for this purpose. Their principle from the beginning was, complete abolition and repeal, and nothing short of repeal; and I believe that they and others would have adhered to it, although no public sympathy had been aroused—though none of these great meetings had been held to cheer them on in their course; for when once a principle like this gets possession of the soul of man, it is indomitable. It is the fight of martyrdom and of victory! There may be victims, there cannot be defeat; there may be delay, but there cannot be eventual repulse. It is to individual devotion—to the determination never to compromise a principle—that we owe most of the world's great blessings. Without it we should have had no political freedom, no Protestant Reformation, no Christian religion!

Could the League falter in its course now—a thing which I hold to be morally impossible—it would still not signify in the great cause; for the leaders in such a cause as this, could they prove traitors, cannot stop the movement; they are but foremost in the ranks; they are marching on 'regular as rolling water;' and if they will not themselves keep in advance, why, they will only be trampled under foot in the progress of the country towards the great consummation. I say again, 'No compromise;' because we are challenged, we are summoned to the conflict. The landowners of England are throwing down the gauntlet; they are going to wage warfare with the League, and they say they will put down the League. We will try that question with them. They are not the bold barons of Runnymede; the age of chivalry is gone; and most of all, it is gone in their ranks, for there is

little chivalry in becoming traders in corn, and taxing the country to enhance their profits.

But what do these people mean by a course which tends to isolate them from every other class of the community? Suspicion in their tenants; hatred and insubordination in their labourers. They wage war on the other great classes in the empire; repudiating, not their debts, but their diamonds; rejecting from their ranks such men as the Spencers, the Westminsters, the Ducies, and the Radnors; disrobing themselves of what should constitute their dignity and their armour. And what do they mean, I say, by standing aloof from the world, and dreaming that they are strong enough to trample under foot its inhabitants, and to reap its plunder? Nothing can await them but discomfiture and confusion. They must soon feel that their state, the more they persist in such a course, is one of insecurity and apprehension; they will feel the ground tremble under them, as it is said to have shaken wherever the fratricide Cain set his foot; and ramble where they will, no sympathy will cheer their course, no kind and gushing feeling will welcome their arrival: their real interest is, then, to reunite themselves with the nation, in conjunction with which they may have respect, wealth, and happiness; in warfare with which they can only bring on the destruction of their class.

The landlords and their tenants.

As to these meetings of the tenantry—ordered to come, as they seem to be in some cases, and declining to come, as they evidently do in others—the deception and exaggeration of their numbers and their contributions have already been mentioned to you. I have no doubt that large exaggerations do take place wherever a numerous meeting is reported; and would the *Morning Herald* favour us, as it sometimes obliges the Government, with the private notes of its reporters, we should then know something more of the real state of the case. I have seen but one account—and that in a local paper—of a genuine meeting of tenant-farmers, placed beyond

suspicion as to the class of persons and the freedom of their discussion. That was a meeting which lately took place at Evesham of the tenant-farmers, members of the Agricultural Society of the Vale of Evesham. About twenty-five of them met together to discuss the subject of leases; and after fairly and fully hearing both sides of the question from two of their number, who had studied the subject and were opposed in opinion, they came to two divisions: one division was on the desirableness of leases, on which twenty voted for it and two against it; the other was on the subject of corn-rents, where there were eighteen for and three against. And such will be the result of these County Protection Associations, if the farmers are allowed fair play. Meanwhile, from their number, it is a pity they do not seek an aggregate meeting. I think, inconvenient as this place is for your number, they might perhaps be accommodated here, and Mr. Paulton could find a private box for the Protection Society of each county. The conscientious friends of the present sliding-scale, and of Sir Robert Peel, might, perhaps, all be accommodated in the manager's box, and then when their discussion was done they might join in yours, and compare notes with you on the great question at issue.

But it will never avail for the landlords to attempt to drive the farmers to such meetings in the same manner as they drive them to the poll at elections—there is more required; and it is difficult to make persons in their present doubting, inquiring, and perhaps suspicious and sullen state of mind, go through the manual exercise which their chairman may desire. I understand that at one of these meetings, when a resolution was to be passed, the chairman had great difficulty in getting a show of hands; he had to tell the farmers, over and over again, that *now* they were to hold up their hands; but the farmers, by perhaps a voluntary blunder, instead of holding up their hands, turned up their noses. On the argumentation at these meetings I shall make no remark; for out of nothing, nothing can come. They have been generally a sheer tissue of

abuse; and the only fragments or grains that are to be found in these bushels of chaff are the old iterations of fallacies which every labourer can detect, of wages rising with the price of corn, of the need of protection against competition, of the desirableness of independence of the foreigner, and so on; things that we may heartily rejoice to hear are brought into something like discussion; for when all the rest of the world has exploded them as nonsensical, it is well that they should be now put forward and subjected to investigation, in those regions where they are still turned to account. It is a favourite theme, this independence of foreigners. One would imagine that the patriotism of the landlord's breast must be most intense. Yet he seems to forget that he is employing guano to manure his fields; that he is spreading a foreign surface over his English soil, through which every atom of corn is to grow; becoming thereby polluted with the dependence upon foreigners which he professes to abjure.

The landlord's 'independence of the foreigner.'

To what is he left, this disclaimer against foreigners and advocate of dependence upon home? Trace him through his career. This was very admirably done by an honourable gentleman, who just now addressed you, at the Salisbury contest. His opponent urged this plea, and Mr. Bouverie stripped him, as it were, from head to foot, showing that he had not an article of dress upon him which did not render him in some degree dependent upon foreigners. We will pursue this subject, and trace his whole life. What is the career of the man whose possessions are in broad acres? Why, a French cook dresses his dinner for him, and a Swiss valet dresses him for dinner; he hands down his lady, decked with pearls that never grew in the shell of a British oyster; and her waving plume of ostrich-feathers certainly never formed the tail of a barn-door fowl. The viands of his table are from all countries of the world; his wines are from the banks of the Rhine and the Rhone. In his conservatory, he regales his sight with the blossoms of South American flowers. In his smoking-room, he

gratifies his scent with the weed of North America. His favourite horse is of Arabian blood; his pet dog, of the St. Bernard's breed. His gallery is rich with pictures from the Flemish school, and statues from Greece. For his amusements, he goes to hear Italian singers warble German music, followed by a French ballet. If he rises to judicial honours, the ermine that decorates his shoulders is a production that was never before on the back of a British beast. His very mind is not English in its attainments; it is a mere picnic of foreign contributions. His poetry and philosophy are from Greece and Rome; his geometry is from Alexandria; his arithmetic is from Arabia; and his religion from Palestine. In his cradle, in his infancy, he rubbed his gums with coral from Oriental oceans; and when he dies, his monument will be sculptured in marble from the quarries of Carrara.

And yet this is the man who says, 'Oh! let us be independent of foreigners! Let us submit to taxation; let there be privation and want; let there be struggles and disappointments; let there be starvation itself; only let us be independent of foreigners!' I quarrel not with him for enjoying the luxuries of other lands, the results of arts that make it life to live. I wish not only that he and his order may have all the good that any climate or region can bear for them—it is their right, if they have wherewithal to exchange for it; what I complain of is, the sophistry, the hypocrisy, and the iniquity of talking of independence of foreigners in the article of food, while there is dependence in all these materials of daily enjoyment and recreation. Food is the article the foreigner most wants to sell; food is that which thousands of our operatives most want to buy; and it is not for him—the mere creature of foreign agency from head to foot—to interpose and say, 'You shall be independent; I alone will be the very essence and quintessence of dependence.' We compromise not this question with parties such as these; no, nor with the legislature.

We are not going to the legislature this session. No

more petitioning. Members of the House of Commons! Members of the House of Lords! do as you please, and what you please; our appeal is *to your masters*. The League goes to the constituencies, to the creators of legislators, and tells them they have made the article badly, and instructs them how to form it better on the first occasion. Here we carry on the warfare; appealing, not, as has been falsely said, to calumny, delusion, or to corruption, but calling up in those who possess political power the intelligence and independence which dignify humanity. And the contrast in the elections that have already taken place since this course was adopted by the League is remarkable: while their adversaries seek out for every little spot, for every speck of dirt and corruption, in human character, and build upon that; while those who espouse the interest of the great land monopoly, hunt up the tailor and shoemaker, or the glovemaker, and say, 'Have you not a little monopoly of your own?—keep up our great monopoly, and we will uphold your little monopoly;' 'Tickle me, Toby; tickle me, do;'—while they endeavour in every way to play upon all the foolishness and baseness of human nature—the League has endeavoured to work by intelligence and principle, and by these alone; calling out, not what is brutal, but what is most divine in human nature; thus realizing that spirit of independence, without which no institution, no forms of freedom, no rights of voting, nothing that society can enact or sanction, ever made a people free and great, or ever will. For this reason it was that they were held to be such 'monstrous interlopers,' such 'strangers.' This raised the cry in London and Salisbury: 'Here are people come up amongst us whose homes are in Lancashire; great strangers, who have no business here.'

This was the same sort of indignation that Doctor Caius manifested in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when he found Slender's man in his closet. When he inquired of Dame Quickly who was there, the lady only inflamed his wrath the more by saying, 'He is an honest man.' Why, the

monopolists use the same language as Doctor Caius: 'Vat shall de honest man do in my closet? there is no honest man shall come into my closet.' But the honest man has got into their closet with a search-warrant, and finds there what shall bring them to shame and confusion, exposing the sophistry, laying bare the tricks, and paving the way for future struggles of a similar description, and of yet more resplendent consequences. We have no compromise on such a question as the corn laws, because we cannot compromise with crime; and I hold these laws to be one great crime, both in themselves and in their consequences. On the very face of the thing they are a fraud; for when a class says to a nation, 'Exclude all foreign corn; be independent of foreigners,' does it not imply that they, the home growers, will furnish the supply? Do they not, by the very fact of interposing to prevent our getting provisions abroad, undertake that there shall be food of their raising at home?

Have they done this? Have they produced it at a price at which the great mass of the community, however industrious, could afford to purchase a sufficient quantity? Have there not been want and starvation both in this country and Ireland, while there has been ample abundance to increase the wealth of the landowners, but not to minister to the necessities of the community? Have they the power? Why, the very increase of our population, some 230,000 a year, would require to feed it the addition every year of a county as large as that of Surrey, for its produce to administer to this additional number of mouths a sufficient quantity of bread and meat. Can they do this? Can they add another county to England? Can they make, as it were, another England? Can they create and furnish us with the produce of a new Ireland; or can they keep the old Ireland?

I say that those laws are a crime, because they occasion the destruction of human food. Not long ago—about the time I was at Liverpool—large quantities of American butter were brought out of the warehouses; a hole was bored in each

firkin—the butter would not answer, as a commercial speculation, to pay the duty on it—and into those firkins pitch and other substances were poured, in order that this butter might be rendered altogether unfit for human use. I believe that ultimately it was actually made into grease for the wheels of the locomotives' engines. At Sunderland the same thing has occurred twice within no great number of weeks, with respect to wheat kept there in bond. The people were starving, and the wheat was all the while rotting within the warehouses, until at last it was brought out from under the Government lock and key, by her Majesty's servants the Custom-house officers, taken to a dunghill, mixed with all sorts of substances, and after being rendered utterly unfit for use for the common purposes of human food, was there converted into manure—and this at a time when the people were talking about the Poor Laws, charities, subscriptions, and collections, and of their tender feelings for the sufferings of the poor.

Corn and crime.

And there is more yet of crime. Let any one look at the table of committals for offences, and compare it with the price of wheat from year to year. The exceptions are very rare in which a rise in the price of corn is not also attended by an increase in the number of committals. In the years from 1834 to 1836, when wheat was at 44*s.* 3*d.* a quarter, the average number of committals was 21,000; from 1837 to 1841, when wheat averaged 63*s.* 2*d.*, the annual number of committals was 25,000: 4000 criminals a year added by this horrible sliding-scale of guilt and misery! To take extreme years: in 1835, wheat was a little under 40*s.* a quarter; the number of committals was 20,731. In 1842, when wheat was 57*s.* 3*d.*, the committals rose to 31,309. There are calculations indicating, by the experience of many years, the results of this system. It is a horrible operation to trace out these iniquitous laws, depressing the circumstances, murdering the soul as well as the body, making even the generous and meritorious tendencies of our nature subservient to crime, rendering the love of a man for his own family, and

those dependent upon him, a motive and an incentive to guilt, creating crime, and mocking the Queen's proclamation for the suppression of vice, by an Act of Parliament for the production of criminality.

Oh! I do declare, before heaven and earth, that I would rather hold up my hand at the bar of the Old Bailey as a culprit driven to crime by the feeling which these iniquitous laws produce, than be one of those who have profited by their enactment to coin money out of the hearts, lives, and consciences of their fellow-creatures.

Nor is this all. The annual table of mortality shows analogous results to those of the table of crime; with the price of wheat, the number of deaths falls and rises. In 1798 and in 1802, wheat was 59*s.* a quarter; the average of deaths, 20,508 in London. In 1800, an intermediate year, and therefore not liable to any exception on the ground of increased population, when wheat was upwards of 60*s.*, the number of deaths was 25,670: 5000 deaths in that year analogous with the increase in the price of food, directly tending to impress on our mind the connection of cause and effect. It seems as if that grim monster had forgotten his impartiality—as if the bony tyrant had become the very servant of monopoly; and though it is still, in some measure, true that 'the rich and the poor lie down together in the grave,' yet wealth, by its laws, sends the poor there first, and sends them there in numbers to prepare for its own reception. The effect of the classification of society by the different degrees of safety and good lodging and nutriment is, that while of the middle and higher class only one child in five fails to attain the age of five years, in the working class half the number die before they reach that period.

Corn and the death rate.

Are we to be told that further experiments should be made in laws connected with phenomena such as these? Are we to give Peel's bill a longer trial, or any form of monopoly whatever? Are we to have more experiments of privation and disappointment and suffering, of crime and of death? It

was an old medical axiom to let experiments be made upon vile and worthless bodies; but here are laws making the most cruel of all experiments, even upon the body of a great and suffering nation. I say, this is enough to arouse every feeling of our souls, and to proclaim a crusade of men, women, and children, of all ranks and classes, against this iniquity; listening to no compromise until it be put down utterly and for ever. For this we band ourselves.

You, inhabitants of the metropolis, will, I trust, take your rightful position, and go forward in the van, and lead on the march of the provinces. For this we combine our exertions, determined not to rest until we behold realized that great object of our anticipation—the giant form of emancipated labour throned on the ruins of all existing monopolies. For this we strive from year to year; and while there is one atom left of restriction on the statute-book—while there is any enactment injurious to the rights of industry and of labour—while there is any imposition on the food of the people—we will never desist from agitation; no, never, never, never! Towards this consummation from year to year we hold onward our course, endeavouring in all its realizations to effect not only good for ourselves, but for other classes also, however blind they may be to their own interests: for we see in universal freedom the best security for the largest property, as well as the rightful and honourable encouragement for those who have no property at all. We believe commercial freedom will develop intellectual and moral freedom—teaching the different classes their dependence on each other, uniting nations in bonds of brotherhood, and tending to realize the anticipations of the great poet before referred to, whom this day gave to Scotland and the world—

> "Now let us pray, that come it may,
> As come it shall for a' that: . . .
> That man to man, the warld o'er,
> Shall brothers be for a' that."

VII.—THE IMPENDING SCARCITY

Speech by W. J. Fox at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, December 10, 1845

In October, 1845, alarm began to be felt at the extent of the mischief caused by the potato disease in Ireland. The newspapers were filled with details of the ravages of an 'enemy whose history and habits' were, in the language of the Government Commissioners, 'as yet but imperfectly known.' A general cry was raised to 'open the ports,' in order that famine might be averted by the admission of food. Sir Robert Peel's administration was tottering, and Lord John Russell issued a letter to the electors of the City of London, dated from Edinburgh, November 22, 1845, declaring for Free Trade. As this document possesses historical interest, it shall be quoted here in full :—

'Gentlemen,—The present state of the country, in regard to its supply of food, cannot be viewed without apprehension. Forethought and bold precaution may avert any serious evils—indecision and procrastination may produce a state of suffering which it is frightful to contemplate.

'Three weeks ago it was generally expected that Parliament would be immediately called together. The announcement that Ministers were prepared at that time to advise the Crown to summon Parliament, and to propose on their first meeting a suspension of the import duties on corn, would have caused orders at once to be sent to various ports of Europe and America for the purchase and transmission of grain for the consumption of the United Kingdom. An Order in Council dispensing with the law was neither necessary nor desirable. No party in Parliament would have made itself responsible for the obstruction of a measure so urgent and so beneficial.

'The Queen's Ministers have met and separated, without affording us any promise of such seasonable relief.

'It becomes us, therefore, the Queen's subjects, to consider how

we can best avert, or at all events mitigate, calamities of no ordinary magnitude.

'Two evils require your consideration. One of these is the disease in the potatoes, affecting very seriously parts of England and Scotland, and committing fearful ravages in Ireland.

'The extent of this evil has not yet been ascertained, and every week, indeed, tends either to reveal unexpected disease, or to abate in some districts the alarm previously entertained. But there is one misfortune peculiar to the failure in this particular crop. The effect of a bad corn harvest is, in the first place, to diminish the supply in the market, and to raise the price. Hence diminished consumption, and the privation of incipient scarcity by which the whole stock is more equally distributed over the year, and the ultimate pressure is greatly mitigated. But the fear of the breaking out of this unknown disease in the potatoes induces the holders to hurry into the market, and thus we have at one and the same time rapid consumption and impending deficiency—scarcity of the article and cheapness of price. The ultimate suffering must thereby be rendered far more severe than it otherwise would be. The evil to which I have adverted may be owing to an adverse season, to a mysterious disease in the potato, to want of science or of care in propagating the plant. In any of these cases, Government is no more subject to blame for the failure of the potato crop, than it was entitled to credit for the plentiful corn harvest which we have lately enjoyed.

'Another evil, however, under which we are suffering, is the fruit of Ministerial counsel and Parliamentary law. It is the direct consequence of an Act of Parliament, passed three years ago, on the recommendation of the present advisers of the Crown. By this law grain of all kinds has been made subject to very high duties on importation. These duties are so contrived, that the worse the quality of the corn, the higher is the duty; so that when good wheat rises to 70*s.* a quarter, the average price of all wheat is 57*s.* or 58*s.*, and the duty 15*s.* or 14*s.* a quarter. Thus the corn barometer points to fair, while the ship is bending under a storm.

'This defect was pointed out many years ago by writers on the Corn Laws, and was urged upon the attention of the House of Commons when the present Act was under consideration.

'But I confess that, on the general subject, my views have in the course of twenty years undergone a great alteration. I used to be of opinion that corn was an exception to the general rules of political economy; but observation and experience have convinced me that we ought to abstain from all interference with the supply of food. Neither a Government nor a legislature can ever regulate the corn markets with the beneficial effects which the entire freedom of sale and purchase are sure of themselves to produce.

'I have for several years endeavoured to obtain a compromise on this subject. In 1839 I voted for a committee of the whole House, with the view of supporting the substitution of a moderate fixed duty for the sliding scale. In 1841 I announced the intention of the then Government of proposing a fixed duty of 8*s*. a quarter. In the past session I proposed the imposition of some lower duty. These propositions were successively rejected. The present First Lord of the Treasury met them in 1839, 1840, and 1841 by eloquent panegyrics of the existing system—the plenty it had caused, the rural happiness it had diffused. He met the propositions for diminished protection in the same way in which he had met the offer of securities for Protestant interests in 1817 and 1825—in the same way in which he met the proposal to allow Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham to send members to Parliament in 1830.

'The result of resistance to qualified concession must be the same in the present instance as in those I have mentioned. It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty. In 1841 the Free-Trade party would have agreed to a duty of 8*s*. a quarter on wheat; and after a lapse of years this duty might have been further reduced, and ultimately abolished. But the imposition of any duty at present, without a provision for its extinction within a short period, would but prolong a contest already sufficiently fruitful of animosity and discontent. The struggle to make bread scarce and dear, when it is clear that part, at least, of the additional price goes to increase rent, is a struggle deeply injurious to an aristocracy which, this quarrel once removed, is strong in property, strong in the construction of our legislature, strong in opinion, strong in ancient associations and the memory of immortal services.

'Let us, then, unite to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people.

'But if this end is to be achieved, it must be gained by the unequivocal expression of the public voice. It is not to be denied that many elections for cities and towns in 1841, and some in 1845, appear to favour the assertion that Free Trade is not popular with the great mass of the community. The Government appear to be waiting for some excuse to give up the present corn law. Let the people, by petition, by address, by remonstrance, afford them the excuse they seek. Let the Ministry propose such a revision of the taxes as in their opinion may render the public burdens more just and more equal; let them add any other provisions which caution and even scrupulous forbearance may suggest; but let the removal of restrictions on the admission of the main articles of food and clothing used by the mass of the people be required, in plain terms, as useful

to all great interests, and indispensable to the progress of the nation.

'I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
'Your obedient servant,
'J. RUSSELL.

'*Edinburgh, November* 22, 1845.'

Numerous public meetings were held throughout the country, and the Manchester men redoubled their efforts. It was evident that the Corn Laws must be repealed, and the only doubt was whether Whigs or Tories should be the repealers. In opening this great meeting in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on the 10th December, George Wilson, who was in the chair, after complimenting Lord John Russell on his change of opinion, said, 'If Sir Robert Peel chooses at the eleventh hour to shake off the trammels of faction, and stand before his fellow-countrymen with the charter of their industrial freedom in his hands, then no man will be held as a greater patriot in the meetings of the League than Sir Robert Peel.' Cobden, Bright, and Milner Gibson also spoke, and a full report of their speeches appears in the *League Journal*. It is no depreciation of them to say that Fox on this occasion won the palm. On the following day Peel's resignation was announced.

THESE stupendous meetings are altogether unprecedented in history; but they are not more unprecedented than the condition of the country which has called them forth and demands their repetition. We are, indeed, in a position not only peculiar, but absolutely singular. The pressure of coming scarcity is upon us; and yet, as a nation, we turn back food from our shores that has been purchased, stored, paid for, and was there awaiting our own consumption, and was in readiness for the approaching season of exigency. Such conduct in an individual would be utter insanity; it would be so in a nation, if the nation and its government were thoroughly identical—if there were not a contrariety of interest, feeling, and purpose, real or supposed, betwixt the great masses of the people and the classes that have for a time got possession of legislative power. They have enforced upon the country this absurdity; they have stained the national character; they are making at this moment our apparent conduct as a people as preposterous as that of the Frenchman in the well-known story of his

failing grammar—his misplaced 'will' and 'shall'—'I will be drowned—nobody shall save me;' and so they make the nation say, by its practical condition, 'We will be starved, and nobody shall feed us.'

And not only is the position of the country a curious one in the incongruities thus enforced upon its conduct, but also in the darkness in which we are kept from day to day as to the extent of the calamity, and the means which her majesty's advisers, or the people's rulers, have to propose for the mitigation of that calamity. Her Majesty herself is said to have learned something of the intentions of her own servants from an opposition journal, which in a day or two is contradicted by a ministerial journal, leaving us only in the midst of perplexity and bewilderment, and that on the most important of all topics—the very means of existence for a great people through a trying period. There is scarcely an object so remote, or a transaction so trifling,—nothing in the material world, or beyond the bounds of this world of ours—nothing so peculiar or individual, but what we can get more authentic information about than we can about our own supplies of provisions for the coming months. We have authentic information by my Lord Rosse's great telescope of the number of stars that compose certain clusters hitherto regarded as nebulæ. We have accurate information by Dr. Buckland's scientific researches of the saurians and megatheria of bygone ages. We know what the fossil lizards, forty feet long, used to feed upon in their time, many millions of years ago, but we know not what we ourselves are to feed upon next month. Every fashionable arrival at Brighton, every dinner-party in May Fair, finds its place in accurate and authoritative statement; and even, thanks to the diligence and the far-sightedness and the communicativeness of the gentleman who writes the *Court Circular*, we know more about the royal baby that will be born in the month of April than we know about the food on which the people shall feed in the month of February.

The general bewilderment.

The perplexity extends through all ranks of society, from the lowest to the highest. Not only is the willing mechanic and the poor labourer in this dense ignorance, but a royal duke tells the world—not that he knows anything of the scarcity; he does not come near that point—not that he knows anything of the panic or alarm of that scarcity; he does not probe the matter so far as that—but he "has heard something of a report of a panic of a scarcity," and he has private information that that report is not altogether to be credited. These confessions of ignorance are ill adapted to excite the confidence of the ignorant mass of the community in those who are raised to eminence by office or by rank. They may stand idle, but time moves on, and whatever of good or evil time has in reserve for us. The inexorable course of events is before us; and too much of bitter experience in past years has taught us what to think of the events that are on their way. Sir Robert Peel has said he will never forget Paisley; we will not forget it either. We take warning by the recollection of those years; and, being forewarned, by the exertion of whatever peaceful energy the people may have, will be forearmed as well as forewarned against the circumstances of the coming period. And it seems we are to have a conflict for that very simple and obvious remedy which the necessities of the time dictate. Individual despotism has never hesitated as to its course; it at once says, 'Let food come in from what ever quarter it may.' Other countries, not under despotism, but more assimilated with our own, have also set the example. Belgium threw open its ports at once, and from day to day came arrivals of grain from a great variety of countries, very many indeed from this country,—exhibiting the extraordinary spectacle of the foreign grain which we had in our own possession leaving our shores, much of it in foreign vessels, steering to a foreign port, to feed the subjects of a foreign country; and then we call all this the protection of native industry!

Why are not those whose business it is to advise up and doing? If they delay, it is for us to urge them on. And as

to the hostility that is threatened, why, let monopoly, if it will, as it boasts, nail its colours to the mast; the only result will be, that the colours will go down with the mast and the vessel altogether. And I would admonish them, too, to take some heed to the language they use. The honourable gentleman[1] who just addressed you adverted to that very undutiful godson of mine, 'the coroneted fishmonger.' I gave him his name, and he answers to it: I have given him much good counsel,—and I wish he would attend to that also. He learns his catechism, I am afraid, much as did the tax-gatherer's boy. 'My child, what is your duty to your neighbour?' Thinking of his father's avocation, the boy says: 'To surcharge him as often as you can.'

The Duke of Richmond.

In this mode does he exercise his duties; and in the course of the hostility he now announces, he has dared to brand with opprobrium the patriotic conduct of perhaps the most patriotic nobleman in this country. He accuses Lord Morpeth of giving his money to an association, meaning the League, for the purpose of creating fictitious votes, and libelling in the newspapers those who differ from him in opinion. And yet he says, withal, that of the integrity, the honourableness, and the sincerity of that noble lord's character there can be no doubt. From which what we gather is this, that, in the Duke of Richmond's opinion, a very sincere, a very honourable, and a very upright man may, nevertheless, be a party to the creation of fictitious votes, and to the libelling in newspapers of those who differ from him in opinion. It was not for a man who

[1] Milner Gibson had observed:—'The Duke of Richmond says, that if the ministers are so perfidious as to propose the repeal of the corn laws, he must look to hereditary wisdom, to the hereditary peerage, as his only safety. In 1839 I remember when his grace said that if the corn laws were repealed he would depart from England for ever,—would leave his native soil, and wander remote and unfriended over the world.' Fox had called the Duke of Richmond 'the coroneted fishmonger,' in a speech of the previous year (May 22, 1844), because the duke had complained of the operation of Peel's tariff on the value of his salmon streams in Scotland—the rent of which had, he said, been reduced by £2000 in consequence.

himself for a considerable period of his life, if he be not now, was a pensioner on the public; for one whose naïve confession will not be forgotten, when discriminating between timber and glass,—'We grow timber, but we do not grow glass'—a man who had amused even the House of Lords by his 'tariff' lamentations, who confessed virtually that he had been pocketing £2000 a year for his salmon more than it was worth—a parliamentarily created price—and grieved over the loss; a man who quarters the younger branches of his family upon the public purse, instead of upon his own property—it was not, I say, for such a man as this to dare to raise his tongue against the purity or the consistency of Lord Morpeth; nor is he in a condition, with his own name appended to pamphlets convicted of grossly falsifying quotations from works of authority, to talk of the falsehood or the libellousness of the press.

The League, I believe, has never libelled his grace of Richmond; but it differs from him in opinion, according to his own dainty phraseology in this matter. The League is of opinion that wealthy proprietors have no business to abuse their legislative powers to private advantage. It differs from him in opinion, and thinks that the wealthy man's hand ought not to be in the poor man's pocket, nor the wealthy man's knife to be slicing off a third from the poor man's loaf. I trust, however, the machinery is at work which will silence the Duke of Richmond. If matters go on as is conjectured in many quarters, he may about the time of the meeting of Parliament receive one of those pithy, laconic notes, with the style of which the public have been pretty well familiarized, from the specimens which have got into the papers, running something in this way: 'Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington desires the Duke of Richmond to be quiet. Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington is obliged either to part with the Corn Laws or to part with Sir Robert Peel. Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington cannot govern the country without Sir Robert Peel; let the Corn Laws be abolished.' An interesting correspondence of this kind will, no doubt, beam light into the

convictions of many of that venerable House, and help us over what otherwise might have been insurmountable difficulties. But, however that may be, we look not to this or that leader—to this or that House, even; the country looks to you, who are marching in its van in this great advance—you, men of Manchester, who have hitherto braved the foe and led on the struggle. Your grip is now firm upon the neck of the serpent: hold it there. Hold it there; hold it hard; and however the venomous creature may writhe and wriggle, if you do but persevere and keep as you are, with the same tenacity of purpose, at length its convulsions will be over, and the country delivered for ever from the poison and the sting of that mighty reptile.

Of all the impertinent pieces of advice which the present time has brought forth, I think the most so is one that is reiterated in sundry monopolist journals—that if there be a scarcity, we should still be submissive and content. We are told—and this is the statement of the Protection Society themselves—that the crop is an average crop; they say nothing of quality; but they report that as to quantity. Now, take their own statement—say that the wheat is up to the average of the harvest: do the people keep down to the average? Have we not been told by authority of 360,000 or 380,000 additions every year to the mouths that are to be fed? What is to become of these 380,000, if our supplies of food are to be kept down to an average of past years? and is it to be matter of congratulation that we have as much food now as we had when we were so many hundred thousands fewer in number? The people grow, and the supplies must grow too; that agency must be employed which is capable of sustaining them. Providence puts this power into our hands. I had almost said it was impious to tell the people they must submit to scarcity—go without food, or get what modicum they can at an exorbitant and monopoly price, and call all they are enduring a dispensation of Providence!

The dispensations of Providence.

Why, Providence makes ports, stretches the bold curve

of the bay, and rolls in the billows, so that they may bear in safety vessels bringing supplies of necessaries and luxuries. Providence makes ports—Providence does not close ports. It was Providence that grew the very corn, the foreign corn, that had arrived in this country, that was in our possession; Providence placed it within our reach: the Corn Laws turn it back, and fly in the face of Providence. Providence endows the banks of the Mississippi and the Missouri with their abundant fertility, making them capable of becoming the granaries of Europe, and of supplying the wants of our industrial myriads, who provide for the cultivators there the clothing which they need. Providence never sends universal scarcity—there is no such thing on record in all history; where one portion of the world fails in its crops, another succeeds, and there is a general superabundance. Providence gives for all; and the lesson from its conduct is, that all should feel their common interest, and administer to each other's common wants. Providence is accountable for none of these things. Providence lays no rate; Providence takes no tax; and Providence tars no butter.

Wicked, we might say blasphemous, teachers are they who would transfer their own iniquitous doings to the Divine government, representing that as not less oppressive and tyrannical than themselves. Why, if it were as they tell us—if Providence indeed willed that a class should gain profits by a nation's sufferings—the only moral would be that of the tempter of old—to curse God and die. Such is the tendency of their teaching in the holy name, which they abuse, and in despite of the instructions of a book everywhere replete with admonitions that we should relieve the poor and the needy, that 'he who withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him,' and which, in the various illustrations of the connection of seemingly small events with great, gives us a better notion of Providence under present circumstances than all their teachers exhibit. It shows us the momentary interruption of our own supply tending to the prompt abolition

of an enormous iniquity that parts us from the rest of the world; it shows us, in the failure of a crop of the lowest vegetable used for human food, the occasion of the destruction of the mightiest monopoly that ever plundered humanity, and revelled in its sufferings; and as it tells the tale of old, how the shepherd-boy, with his sling and with a smooth stone from the brook, brought down the Philistine giant, so it shows us now the more profane giant of monopoly laid prostrate by the blow of a rotten potato.

If our condition is not rightly represented as an afflictive dispensation of Providence, to which we have nothing to do but submit unmurmuringly, so neither can it be fairly ascribed to the progress of manufactures—to the commercial system by which, in fact, the country has been aggrandized. This has been a favourite topic with monopolist advocates. They have spoken of our overgrown establishments for producing goods. They once ventured to suggest that the greater portion of London, Manchester, and Liverpool might as well be rased to the ground, and the inhabitants distributed over the country, in parishes, on small allotments, each with a squire and a parson to take care of them. They are frequently reminding us that commerce is 'more unfaithful than the southern gale,' that she 'may shift to other shores her sail.'

Now, what does all this mean? There may have been ages in history when the operations of commerce appeared to change their localities capriciously; but what was the commerce of ancient times? Merely the interchange of natural products. It is only in modern history that real commerce has sprung up; it is one of the last results of civilization, and amongst the grandest. It has sprung up, not in consequence of caprices, but of wants; not for the interchange of merely natural products, but for the distribution of art and capital and industry throughout the world; uniting the nations by the peculiar abilities of different people to contribute different results to

The spirit of commerce.

the great common sum of good. It is a system that in its very nature implies advance; and I see no reason to imagine that any number of years which our figures can express will find it arrived at a point beyond which there is no progress. Commerce grows like the oak; it may seem a mere sapling, which the passing breeze may level with the ground, but its roots strike this way and that, as if instinctively in search of their proper nutriment; its leaves unfold themselves to the air, to imbibe from it the nourishment it affords; and year after year adds to the rings that circle it, and denote its age, and show the steadiness and equality of its growth. As it strikes deep into the earth, so it extends high up into the air, it spreads abroad a grateful shade and shelter, and the birds of heaven sing among its branches. Commerce flows like the river; it may be confined for a time, when it is yet but small and feeble, by rocky barriers, but it goes on deepening and widening, and fertilising its banks on either side, and towns and cities rise upon its shores, and it bears upon its bosom the wealth of provinces, carrying it along to meet the ocean, where they are to find nature's broad highway to every region of the globe.

And such is the growth, and such the natural flowing, of the commercial power and principle. Why, at this very moment, when articles of cotton clothing seem to be among the prime necessities of life to so many civilized nations of the 900 millions of the earth's inhabitants, not above 120 millions are provided with them. There are seven to one that use your cotton manufactures spread all over the surface of the earth, and all of them able to contribute something from their own regions, which, in return for what you furnish, shall enlarge your wealth, shall add to your enjoyments, shall provide for your multitudes, shall stimulate your arts and industry, and aggrandize the British name by linking it with the world's advancement and the comfort and progress of its inhabitants. See how it advances with us, even here, in this little isle of ours; now intersected, or about to be intersected, from end

to end, and across its breadth, with those lines of locomotion that annihilate time and space. Throughout the land the barrier of distance is thrown down, and the galvanic telegraph lends its instantaneous communication. The spirit of commerce does all this. It seizes the elementary powers; it harnesses them; it makes their mighty energies minister to the production of human good and the gratification of human wishes. It bridges the mighty ocean; it extends from our own country to all Europe; it is at work everywhere.

This system of more rapid communication, and with it eventually—however prejudices may obstruct—of free interchange, is extending throughout the whole length and breadth of Europe. Railroads will run ere long, transversing the course of every mighty stream; as the rivers flow in one direction, the iron lines will be laid down in another, until, throughout all the nations of Europe, there will be the means of a rapid transit from the Ebro to the Rhine, from the Rhine to the Danube, from the Danube to the Vistula, from the Vistula to the Volga. All along with these mighty natural arteries of Europe will the iron muscles be laid down, aiding and co-operating with the energy of the human frame; and augmenting the strength of all these nations for their mutual good, their mutual enjoyment. And not Europe merely: the New World and the Old are thus linked together; and even the ancient nation, so long secluded, whose inhabitants learnt their wisdom from Confucius, and who have kept aloof for ages from others—they are becoming one with us; the barriers of space and time, the barriers of superstition and prejudice, all are destined to succumb before the growing spirit of commerce. It puts its belt around the globe, and it is itself as firm and solid as that globe; a portion, too, of mighty nature; a part of the great providential system that formed worlds and suns and systems, and rolls them along in their harmonious motions.

The power that governs our country suffices not at the present moment to save it from the prospect of calamity;

but this is owing to the accident, to the unnatural and preposterous circumstance, that those who enrich the country are not those who have a decisive voice in ruling the country. A class interposes, and for a time throws doubt and suspicion even on the workings of Nature and of Providence. It is a momentary obscurity; and the League may warn the monopolists in the words of Gray's bard to the tyrant of his country:

> 'Fond, impious man! think'st thou yon gloomy cloud,
> Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day?
> To-morrow he repairs his golden flood,
> And warms the nations with redoubled ray.'

And such will be the gladdening sunlight of Free Trade, and its joy-giving force, after this temporary obscuration.

Other counsellors of the public say, 'We have got through times of alarm before, and therefore let us hope we may get through again.' We have got through them before, but how? In 1825–26–27—the last three years of the former Corn Law—in every one of those years the Government was obliged to let foreign corn in bond out at a reduced and almost nominal duty; they also asked and obtained the power of admitting half a million quarters of foreign corn in 1826. In April of that year they declared—as some ministers and legislators have of late declared—that they had no such purpose, the Cabinet had come to no decision on the Corn Laws; and on the 1st of May afterwards they came down to the House with their proposition, to throw open the warehouses, and to allow of that extent of importation. We got through in those years, but how? How in a later period? We got through with multiplied bankruptcies, with increased committals for crime, with want extending through the streets of our towns, with incendiary fires blazing all over the rural districts. We got through, but we did so at a fearful expense of privation and suffering, of disease and of mortality.

In the name of Heaven, let us try to get through better the next time! And there is something to encourage the

hope; the question is better understood now than it was then; the ways of getting through which were then submitted to will not now be endured. In 1815 there was a sort of instinctive blind outbreak against the passing of these Corn Laws: there were riots, blood was shed in the streets; the people struggled like blind Samson, and like blind Samson were sent back to toil in their prison-houses for the benefit of their taskmasters. But the lancet of knowledge has couched blind Samson's eyes. The physical power of the many and the moral power are now in unison, in an alliance that cannot be broken. There is wisdom to direct the guidance of that strength; and thus put forth, where is the power that shall stand before it? It is coming, we know it is coming; be you but firm, unrelaxing, unbending, in every exertion—every legal and peaceful exertion—that may promote this good cause. New allies are announced every day. Mr. Labouchere, in this morning's *Times*, adds his name to the converts from a fixed duty. They are all coming in, but it is somewhat misnamed to call this leading. Much has been made of Lord John Russell's name as the Liberal leader, because twenty years' consideration has led him to the point which the intelligence of the country had arrived at so long before. We welcome him gladly. I believe he has come amongst us because the cry was so loud and strong. Being made a little louder and a little stronger, it may bring us another Liberal leader, in the person of Sir Robert Peel; and raise it to its loudest pitch, and we may have that great Liberal leader, the Duke of Wellington, in our ranks.

Converts and led leaders.

While we remember all this, let us never forget who they are that have done this, and who in the day of triumph should wear the laurels. There has been at times a practice of dealing with works of art that I think ought not to be tolerated. Julius Cæsar is said to have been so pleased with the statue of Alexander the Great by Aristippus, that he ordered the head to be taken off and his own countenance

to be put on its shoulders. And I myself once lived in a cathedral town where there was a statue of St. Paul over the great western entrance of the church. The men at work in the repairs knocked St. Paul's head off; the dean and chapter, being too stingy to employ a sculptor, went to some old stonemason's shop in the town, where they found a judge's head, with a long wig on; and there St. Paul stands to this day, with a judge's wig and curls on his head! Now, as preposterous a transformation as this would it be, when in a coming time—I hope in the new Houses of Parliament—the statues shall be erected to the founders of Free Trade, if on those statues should be placed the heads of Russell, Peel, and Wellington, instead of those of Cobden, Bright, and Villiers. Great as may be the political advantage—the advantage of parliamentary tactics—of those eminent names, that is all we can plead for them. The work has been done; the chariot of Free Trade has been driven within sight of the goal; and Russell, Peel, and Wellington at best are only yoked to it to drag it along the few remaining paces to its final destination.

But trust them not. Lord John Russell may not have the power, the Duke of Wellington may not have the will, and Sir Robert Peel, having played the monopolists a slippery trick one way, may play the free-traders a slippery trick another way. Trust in yourselves, under the guidance of that Power which ever smiles propitiously on the true, the just, and the right. There is a piece of advice which was given some time ago, with no very charitable intent, perhaps, to the Orangemen of Ireland: 'Trust in Providence, and keep your powder dry.' We don't use gunpowder; our weapon is of a very different and a much more potent description. Bayonets cannot pierce it, balls cannot level it. Opinion is a power which no form of physical force—multitudinous or military—can eventually prevail against. But means must be employed; and I say to you: 'Trust in Providence, and keep your names upon the registration; trust in Providence,

and multiply your 40*s.* freeholds; trust in Providence, and win cities and counties, and show parliament and the world your unalterable determination that the shackles of trade and industry shall be knocked off for ever.' In that confidence you cannot be disappointed. The time is coming—it is clearly coming.

'Powder dry!' No, our cause is not like a cannon; it is more like a steam-engine. It is preparing for its journey, the hour of starting is come, the bell rings, and it rings the death-knell of monopoly. There is a steady hand (*pointing to the chairman*) to steer the engine. There are active stokers to keep up a bright fire (*pointing to Cobden and Bright*). On it then moves. Out of the way, calves and pigs! out of the way, or you will be veal and pork in no time! Booted squires and sportsmen, clear the line, or down you go, horse and rider, in spite of all your game laws! Such a train as that would dash through a house if it stood in the way, though it should be a house as old and as strong for its age as the House of Lords itself. On it goes, brightened in the sun, careless of the storm; all good spirits in heaven and earth in sympathy with its progress. Nor shall it rest until it reach its final destination; until we are home—in the people's home—a home made happy by freedom, peace, plenty, and progress!

VIII.—THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS

Speech by John Bright at Covent Garden Theatre, December 19, 1845

The following speech was delivered at one of the Covent Garden meetings, immediately after the temporary resignation of Sir Robert Peel. Five days before the principal subscribers to the funds of the League had met, and had unanimously resolved to appeal to the public for an emergency fund of £250,000. Every part of the house was filled to overflowing. The chief speakers were Cobden, Bright, and Fox. Villiers was in the chair. According to the *Times* report, Bright was received 'with deafening cheers.'

During the last month, I have visited, as one of a deputation from the Council of the League, many towns in this country. I have been present at meetings in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Somersetshire, and now in Middlesex; and I am forced to the conclusion that the agitation now in progress throughout this kingdom is of no common or trivial character. Notwithstanding the hope that my friend (Cobden) who has just addressed you has expressed, that it may not become a war of classes, I am not sure that it has not already become such, and I doubt whether it can have any other character. I believe this to be a movement of the commercial and industrious classes against the lords and great proprietors of the soil.

Within the last fifty years trade has done much for the people of England. Our population has greatly increased; our villages have become towns, and our small towns large cities. The contemned class of manufacturers and traders has assumed another and a very different position, and the

great proprietors of the soil now find that there are other men and interests to be consulted in this kingdom besides those of whom they have taken such great care through the legislation which they have controlled. In the varying fortunes of this contest we have already seen one feeble and attenuated Administration overthrown, and now we see another, which every man thought powerful and robust, prostrate in the dust. It is worth while that the people, and that statesmen, should regard this result, and learn from it a lesson. What was it that brought the Whig Government down in 1841, and what is it that has brought down Sir Robert Peel now? Have not we good grounds for asserting that the corn law makes it impossible for any party longer to govern England during its continuance? No statesman dare now take office upon the understanding that he is to maintain the system which the Protectionists have asserted to be a fundamental principle in the Constitution of the kingdom.

The Corn Laws and Parties.

We have heard that the Whig Government left the country in great distress, and its financial affairs in much embarrassment. But no one has ever pointed out the particular acts of that Government which made the revenue deficient. It was not the taking off of taxes injudiciously—it was not a more than ordinarily extravagant expenditure of the public funds which produced that effect; but it was the collapse of the national industry—it was the failure of the sources whence flow the prosperity of our trade, a calamity which arose from deficient harvests, those deficient harvests being destructive to our trade and industry, because the corn law denied to us the power of repairing the mischief by means of foreign supplies. Great landed proprietors may fancy that trade is of small importance; but of this we are at present assured, that no Government can maintain its popularity or keep up its power so long as we have deficient harvests and restrictions on the importation of foreign food.

Under such a state of things, how is social order to be

preserved? When prices are high the revenue invariably declines, and higher taxes must be imposed; general discontent prevails, because there is general suffering; and the Government, whatever be its party name, or however numerous may be its supporters in either House of Parliament, must, under these circumstances, first become unpopular, and then, finally, become extinct. We are now brought to this conclusion, that the continuous government of this country by any administration is totally incompatible with the maintenance of the corn laws. Lord John Russell acknowledges it, and Sir Robert Peel, by his sudden retirement from office, has given his testimony to the fact. But there are men who deny it; such men, for example, as Sir John Tyrrell and Mr. Bramston, the latter celebrated, I believe, as the leader in the great lard debate. These men, down in Essex, speak of Sir Robert Peel in the most opprobrious language. They say they are glad that the 'organized hypocrisy' is at an end, that they are delighted that 'the reign of humbug is over,' that they are astounded at the perfidy and treachery of the men whom they lifted into office. It is neither perfidy nor treachery of which they have to complain. Sir Robert Peel cannot, any more than other men, do impossibilities; and it is an impossibility to govern this country with the corn law in existence. Sir John Tyrrell, and the like of him, do not shrink from the heavy responsibility of attempting this impossible task; but Sir Robert Peel does shrink from it. Sir Robert Peel is in a very different position from that which they occupy. The country has a hold upon him; he is responsible, and as Prime Minister he knows that he must be held responsible. But, further, he is responsible also to posterity, and no man more than Sir Robert Peel wishes to stand well upon the page of his country's history. But as for the squires, the country has no hold upon them; it expects nothing from them, and will make them responsible or nothing. The Tyrrells and the Bramstons are lost amid the herd of squires, and nobody can lay hold of them to

make them atone for national calamities. And if the country has no hold upon them, certainly posterity has none. No man who records the history of this period will ever write long paragraphs about the Tyrrells and the Bramstons. All that posterity will know of these, and of such as these, will be communicated to them upon a marble tablet in some obscure parish church.

This contest has now been waged for seven years; it was a serious one when commenced, but it is a far more serious one now. Since the time when we first came to London to ask the attention of Parliament to the question of the corn law, two millions of human beings have been added to the population of the United Kingdom. The table is here as before; the food is spread in about the same quantity as before; but two millions of fresh guests have arrived, and that circumstance makes the question a serious one, both for the Government and for us. These two millions are so many arguments for the Anti-Corn-law League—so many emphatic condemnations of the policy of this iniquitous law. I see them now in my mind's eye ranged before me, old men and young children, all looking to the Government for bread; some endeavouring to resist the stroke of famine, clamorous and turbulent, but still arguing with us; some dying mute and uncomplaining. Multitudes have died of hunger in the United Kingdom since we first asked the Government to repeal the corn law, and although the great and powerful may not regard those who suffer mutely and die in silence, yet the recording angel will note down their patient endurance and the heavy guilt of those by whom they have been sacrificed.

We have had a succession of skirmishes; we now approach the final conflict. It may be worth while to inquire who and what are the combatants in this great battle? Looking in the columns of the newspapers, and attending, as I have attended, hundreds of meetings held to support the principles of Free Trade, we must conclude, that on the face of it the struggle is

that of the many against the few. It is a struggle between the numbers, wealth, comforts, the all in fact, of the middle and industrious classes, and the wealth, the union, and sordidness of a large section of the aristocracy of this empire; and we have to decide—for it may be that this meeting itself may to no little extent be the arbiter in this great contest—we have to decide now in this great struggle, whether in this land in which we live, we will longer bear the wicked legislation to which we have been subjected, or whether we will make one effort to right the vessel, to keep her in her true course, and, if possible, to bring her safely to a secure haven. Our object, as the people, can only be, that we should have good and impartial government for everybody. As the whole people, we can by no possibility have the smallest interest in any partial or unjust legislation; we do not wish to sacrifice any right of the richest or most powerful class, but we are resolved that that class shall not sacrifice the rights of a whole people.

The rule of the landowners.

We have had landlord rule longer, far longer than the life of the oldest man in this vast assembly, and I would ask you to look at the results of that rule, and then decide whether it be not necessary to interpose some check to the extravagance of such legislation. The landowners have had unlimited sway in Parliament and in the provinces. Abroad, the history of our country is the history of war and rapine: at home, of debt, taxes, and rapine too. In all the great contests in which we have been engaged we have found that this ruling class have taken all the honours, while the people have taken all the scars. No sooner was the country freed from the horrible contest which was so long carried on with the powers of Europe, than this law, by their partial legislation, was enacted—far more hostile to British interests than any combination of foreign powers has ever proved. We find them legislating corruptly: they pray daily that in their legislation they may discard all private ends and partial affections, and after prayers they sit down to make a

law for the purpose of extorting from all the consumers of food a higher price than it is worth, that the extra price may find its way into the pockets of the proprietors of land, these proprietors being the very men by whom this infamous law is sustained.

In their other legislation we find great inequality. For example, they deal very leniently with high gaming on the turf, and very severely with chuck-farthing and pitch and toss. We find them enacting a merciless code for the preservation of wild animals and vermin kept for their own sport; and, as if to make this law still more odious, we find them entrusting its administration, for the most part, to sporting gentlemen and game preservers. We find throughout England and Wales, that the proportion of one in eleven of our whole population consists of paupers; and that in the south and south-western counties of England, where squiredom has never been much interfered with, the pauperism is as one to seven of the whole population. We find, moreover, that in Scotland there is an amount of suffering no less, perhaps, though not so accurately set down in figures. We find the cottages of the peasantry pulled down in thousands of cases, that the population on the landed estates may be thinned, and the unfortunate wretches driven into the towns to procure a precarious support, or beyond the ocean, to find a refuge in a foreign land. But in that country across the Channel, whence we now hear the wail of lamentation, where trade is almost unknown, where landowners are predominant and omnipotent, we find not one in seven, but at least half the population reduced to a state which may be termed a condition of pauperism. Pauperism.

The men who write for Protectionist newspapers sometimes heap their scorn upon the inhabitants of the American republic. New York is that State of the Union in which there is the most pauperism, for to that State the stream of emigration from this country and from Ireland flows; and yet in that State, the most pauperized in the whole republic, there is only one pauper

to every 184 of the population. It is true that they have not an hereditary peerage to trust to. They know nothing there of a House of Lords, seventy or eighty members of which deposit their legislative power in the hands of one old man. It is not a wise thing for the hereditary peerage and the Protectionist party to direct the attention of the people of this country to the condition of the American republic. We do not expect perfection either in the New World or in the Old; all we ask is, that when an abuse is pointed out, it may be airly and openly inquired into, and, if it be proved to be an abuse, honestly abated.

I am always fearful of entering upon the question of the condition of that portion of our working population amongst whom these squires and lords principally live; but I find that those newspapers which stand in a very ambiguous character before the public, which sometimes are, and sometimes are not, the organs of the Government, but are always organs which play a tune that jars upon the nerves of the people—I find those papers are now endeavouring to play the old game of raising hostile feelings in the manufacturing districts between the employers and the employed. Let them write; bread has risen too much within the last six months, and within the last two months trade has suffered too sad a reverse, for their writing to have any effect now. There is the most cordial, complete, and, I believe I may add, lasting union amongst all classes in the manufacturing districts in reference to this cause. But how stands the case in the rural districts? Can the Protectionists call a meeting in any town or village in the kingdom, giving a week's notice of their intention to call their tenants together, and imagine that they will have a vote in favour of Protection?

Employers and employed.

They sometimes think we are hard upon the aristocracy. They think that the vast population of Lancashire and Yorkshire are democratic and turbulent. But there are no elements there, except that of great numbers, which are to be compared in their dangerous character with the elements of disaffection

and insubordination which exist round about the halls and castles of this proud and arrogant aristocracy. You have seen in the papers, within the last fortnight, that the foul and frightful crime of incendiarism has again appeared. It always shows itself when we have had for some short time a high price of bread. The corn law is as great a robbery of the man who follows the plough as it is of him who minds the loom, with this difference, that the man who follows the plough is, of the two, nearest the earth, and it takes less power to press him into it. Mr. Benett, one of the Members for Wiltshire, at an agricultural meeting held not long since, made a very long speech, in which he said some remarkable things—the most remarkable being, that if he had again to come into the world, and had the option of choosing the particular rank or class in society to which he would belong, after reviewing, I believe, a period of about seventy years, he confessed that he would choose to be an agricultural labourer. Now, this sentiment is certainly of a very novel character; and it is one worth examining, coming, as it did, from a man who had at one time, I am told, a property of eight or ten thousand a year in land.

The agricultural labourer.

Now, what is the condition of this agricultural labourer, for whom they tell us Protection is necessary? He lives in a parish whose owner, it may be, has deeply mortgaged it. The estate is let to farmers without capital, whose land grows almost as much rushes as wheat. The bad cultivation of the land provides scarcely any employment for the labourers, who become more and more numerous in the parish; the competition which there is amongst these labourers for the little employment to be had, bringing down the wages to the very lowest point at which their lives can be kept in them. They are heart-broken, spirit-broken, despairing men. They have been accustomed to this from their youth, and they see nothing in the future which affords a single ray of hope. We have attended meetings in those districts, and have been received with the utmost enthusiasm by these round-frocked

labourers. They would have carried us from the carriage which we had travelled in, to the hustings; and if a silly squire or a foolish farmer attempted any disturbance or improper interference, these round-frocked men were all around us in an instant, ready to defend us; and I have seen them hustle many a powerful man from the field in which the meeting was being held.

If there be one view of this question which stimulates me to harder work in this cause than another, it is the fearful sufferings which I know to exist amongst the rural labourers in almost every part of this kingdom. How can they be men under the circumstances in which they live? During the period of their growing up to manhood, they are employed at odd jobs about the farm or the farm-yard, for wages which are merely those of little children in Lancashire. Every man who marries is considered an enemy to the parish; every child who is born into the world, instead of being a subject of rejoicing to its parents and to the community, is considered as an intruder come to compete for the little work and the small quantity of food which is left to the population. And then comes toil, year after year, long years of labour, with little remuneration; but perhaps at sixty or seventy, a gift of £1 and a coat, or of £2, from the Agricultural Society, because they have brought up a large family, and have not committed that worst of all sins, taken money from the parochial rates. One of their own poets has well expressed their condition :—

> 'A blessèd prospect—
> To slave while there is strength—in age the workhouse,
> A parish shell at last, and the little bell
> Toll'd hastily for a pauper's funeral!'

But the crowning offence of the system of legislation under which we have been living is, that a law has been enacted, in which it is altogether unavoidable that these industrious and deserving men should be brought down to so helpless and despairing a condition. By withdrawing the stimulus of

competition, the law prevents the good cultivation of the land of our country, and therefore diminishes the supply of food which we might derive from it. It prevents, at the same time, the importation of foreign food from abroad, and it also prevents the growth of supplies abroad, so that when we are forced to go there for them they are not to be found. The law is, in fact, a law of the most ingeniously malignant character. It is fenced about in every possible way. The most demoniacal ingenuity could not have invented a scheme more calculated to bring millions of the working classes of this country to a state of pauperism, suffering, discontent, and insubordination than the corn law which we are now opposing.

And then a fat and sleek dean, a dignitary of the Church and a great philosopher, recommends for the consumption of the people—he did not read a paper about the supplies that were to be had in the great valley of the Mississippi, but he said that there were Swede turnips and mangel-wurzel;—and the Hereditary Earl Marshal of England, as if to out-herod Herod himself, recommends hot water and a pinch of curry-powder. I was rejoiced, not for the sake of the Duke of Norfolk, for I pitied him, but still I was in my heart rejoiced when I saw the speech which he had made in Sussex. The people of England have not, even under thirty years of corn law influence, been sunk so low as to submit tamely to this insult and wrong. It is enough that a law should have been passed to make your toil valueless, to make your skill and labour unavailing to procure for you a fair supply of the common necessaries of life—but when to this grievous iniquity they add the insult of telling you to go, like beasts that perish, to mangel-wurzel, or to something which even the beasts themselves cannot eat, then I believe the people of England will rise, and with one voice proclaim the downfall of this odious system.

This law is the parent of many of those grievous fluctuations in trade under which so much suffering is created in this

commercial kingdom. There is a period coming—it may be as bad or worse than the last—when many a man, now feeling himself independent and comfortable in his circumstances, will find himself swept away by the torrent, and his goodly ship made a complete wreck. Capital avails almost nothing; fluctuations in trade we have, such as no prudence can guard against. We are in despair one year, and in a state of great excitement in the next. At one time ruin stares us in the face, at another we fancy that we are getting rich in a moment. Not only is trade sacrificed, but the moral character of the country is injured by the violent fluctuations created by this law. And now have we a scarcity coming or not? They say that to be forewarned is to be fore-armed, and that a famine foretold never comes. And so this famine could not have come if the moment we saw it to be coming we had had power to relieve ourselves by supplies of food from abroad. The reason why a famine foretold never comes is because, when it is foreseen and foretold, men prepare for it, and thus it never comes. But here, though it has been both foreseen and foretold, there is a law passed by a paternal legislature, remaining on the statute-book, which says to twenty-seven millions of people, 'Scramble for what there is, and if the poorest and the weakest starve, foreign supplies shall not come in for fear some injury should be done to the mortgaged landowners.'

Well, if this class of whom I have spoken have maintained this law for thirty years—if they continued it from 1838 to 1842—be assured that no feeling of mercy, no relenting, no sympathy for the sufferings of the people, will weigh one atom in the scale in making them give up the law now. They have no one to whom they can look for a promise to maintain it; but we have some one to whom to look for a promise to repeal it. But the promises of Lord John Russell, or any other minister, are entirely conditional. He knows that he alone cannot repeal the corn law. I had almost said that the over-turning of the monarchy would be a trifle compared with the touching of the pockets of the squires. Lord John

Russell himself has said that it can only be done by the unequivocal expression of the public will. How is this expression to be made? By meetings such as this, and by the meetings which myself and others have seen in all parts of the kingdom; and also by preparations of the most active character for that general election which, in all human probability, is near upon us.

I believe you have heard that we had a meeting in Manchester the other day, which was attended by more of the wealth and influence of that district than I have ever seen assembled at a meeting of the same numbers before. It was resolved on Tuesday to have a general meeting of all those who are wishful to support the League in this great and final struggle. It has been announced that the Council of the League are calling upon their friends throughout the country to raise a fund of £250,000 for the purpose of being ready in any emergency, and for the sake of maintaining before the ranks of the Protectionists, at least, as bold and resolute a character as we have maintained for the past seven years. Now, that money will be subscribed as it is required, and that large sum will be paid, and I can promise this meeting and the country that it will be honestly and judiciously applied to carry out the great national object for which the League has been established. If the Protectionists like to defer the settlement of this question till the warm weather comes, we will not trouble our friends to tear themselves half to pieces in getting within the walls of this theatre, but we will ask them to meet here, in Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Sheffield, Birmingham, and other towns, in numbers so great, in unanimity so remarkable, and in resolution so undaunted, that the aristocracy of this country, with all their pride of ancestry and their boasted valour, will quail before the demonstration that will then be made.

The emergency fund.

Two centuries ago the people of this country were engaged in a fearful conflict with the Crown. A despotic and treacherous monarch assumed to himself the right to levy

taxes without the consent of Parliament and the people. That assumption was resisted. This fair island became a battle-field, the kingdom was convulsed, and an ancient throne overturned. And, if our forefathers two hundred years ago resisted that attempt—if they refused to be the bondmen of a king, shall we be the born thralls of an aristocracy like ours? Shall we, who struck the lion down, shall we pay the wolf homage? or shall we not, by a manly and united expression of public opinion, at once, and for ever, put an end to this giant wrong?

Our cause is at least as good as theirs. We stand on higher vantage-ground; we have large numbers at our back; we have more of wealth, intelligence, union, and knowledge of the political rights and the true interests of the country; and, what is more than all this—we have a weapon, a power, and machinery, which is a thousand times better than that of force, were it employed—I refer to the registration, and especially to the 40*s.* freehold, for that is the great constitutional weapon which we intend to wield, and by means of which we are sure to conquer, our laurels being gained, not in bloody fields, but upon the hustings and in the registration courts. Now, I do hope, that if this law be repealed within the next six months, and if it should then be necessary that this League should disperse, I do trust that the people of England will bear in mind how great a panic has been created among the monopolist rulers by this small weapon, which we have discovered hid in the Reform Act, and in the Constitution of the country. I would implore the middle and working classes to regard it as the portal of their deliverance, as the strong and irresistible weapon before which the domination of this hereditary peerage must at length be laid in the dust.

The weapon of reform.

IX.—THE LEAGUE AND SIR ROBERT PEEL

Speech by Cobden, January 15, 1846.

No less than 9000 people assembled in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, to hear Cobden and Bright on the eve of their triumph. They had both made great speeches at Leeds on the previous day. Four days later Parliament opened, and Sir Robert Peel proclaimed that his opinions had undergone a great change—that he too was a corn law repealer. It may be mentioned that at this meeting George Wilson, chairman of the League, was able to announce that £150,000 had already been subscribed to the Emergency Fund, half from Manchester, and a quarter from the West Riding of Yorkshire.

I shall begin the few remarks which I have to offer to this meeting by proposing, contrary to my usual custom, a resolution; and it is, 'That the merchants, manufacturers, and other members of the National Anti-Corn-Law League claim no protection whatever for the manufactured products of this country, and desire to see obliterated for ever the few nominally protective duties against foreign manufactures, which still remain upon our statute books.' Gentlemen, if any of you have taken the pains to wade through the reports of the protectionist meetings, as they are called, which have been held lately, you would see that our opponents, at the end of seven years of our agitation, have found out their mistake, and are abandoning the corn laws; and now, like unskilful blunderers as they are, they want to take up a new position, just as we are going to achieve the victory. Then they have been telling something very like fibs, when they claimed the corn laws as compensation for peculiar burdens. They say now that they want merely protection in common with all other interests, and they now call themselves the advocates of protection to native

industry in all its branches; and, by way of making the appeal to the less-informed portion of the community, they say that the Anti-Corn-Law League are merely the advocates of free trade in corn, but that we want to preserve a monopoly in manufactures.

Now, the resolution which I have to submit to you, and which we will put to this meeting to-night—the largest by far that I ever saw in this room, and comprising men of every class and of every calling in this district—let that resolution decide, once and for ever, whether our opponents can with truth lay that to our charge henceforth. There is nothing new in this proposition, for at the very beginning of this agitation —at the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce—when that faint voice was raised in that small room in King Street in December, 1838, for the total and immediate repeal of the corn laws—when that ball was set in motion which has been accumulating in strength and velocity ever since, why, the petition stated fairly that this community wanted no protection for its own industry.[1]

We have passed similar resolutions at all our great aggregate meetings of delegates in London ever since that was issued.

I don't put this resolution as an argument or as an appeal to meet the appeals made in the protection societies' meetings. I believe that the men who now, in this seventh year of our discussion, can come forth before their country, and talk as those men have done—I believe that you might as well preach to the deaf adder. You cannot convince them. I doubt whether they have not been living in their shells, like oysters; I doubt whether they know that such a thing is in existence as a railroad, or a penny postage, or even an heir to the throne. They are in profound ignorance of everything, and incapable of being taught. We don't appeal to them, but to a very large portion of this community, who don't take a very prominent part in this discussion—who may be considered as important lookers-on. Many have been misled by the reiterated

[1] See for the petition, p. 130.

assertions of our opponents; and it is at this eleventh hour to convince these men, and to give them an opportunity of joining our ranks, as they will do, that I offer this proof of disinterestedness and the fairness of our proposals. I don't intend to go into an argument to convince any man here that protection to all must be protection to none. If it takes from one man's pocket, and allows him to compensate himself by taking an equivalent from another man's pocket, and if that goes on in a circle through the whole community, it is only a clumsy process of robbing all to enrich none; and simply has this effect, that it ties up the hands of industry in all directions. I need not offer one word to convince you of that. The only motive that I have to say a word is, that what I say here may convince others elsewhere—the men who meet in protection societies. But the arguments I should adduce to an intelligent audience like this would be spoken in vain to the members of parliament who are now the advocates of protection. I shall meet them in less than a week in London, and there I will teach the A B C of this protection. It is of no use trying to teach children words of five syllables, when they have not got out of the alphabet.

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Well, we have our protectionist opponents; but how we may congratulate ourselves on the position which they have given to this question by the discussion that has been raised everywhere during the last few months! We cannot enter a steamboat or a railway carriage—nay, we cannot even go into an omnibus—but the first thing that any man does, almost before he has deposited his umbrella, is to ask, 'Well, what is the last news about the corn laws?' Now, we who remember how difficult it was, at the beginning of our agitation, to bring men's minds to the discussion of this question, when we think that every newspaper is now full of it—the same broad sheet containing, perhaps, a report of this meeting, and of the miserable drivelling of some hole and corner agricultural gathering—and when we think that the whole community is engaged in

reading the discussion and pondering on the several arguments, we can desire no more. The League might close its doors to-morrow, and its work might be considered as done, the moment it compels or induces people to discuss the question.

But the feeling I have alluded to is spreading beyond our own country. I am glad to hear that in Ireland the question is attracting attention. You have probably heard that my friend Mr. Bright and I have received a requisition, signed by merchants and manufacturers of every grade and party in Belfast, soliciting us to go there and address them; and I deeply regret that we cannot put our feet on Irish ground to advocate this question. To-day I have received a copy of a requisition to the mayor of Drogheda, calling a meeting for next Monday, to petition for the total and immediate repeal of the corn laws, and I am glad to notice at the head of that requisition the name of the Catholic Primate, Dr. Croly, a man eminent for learning, piety, and moderation; and that it is also headed by the rest of the Catholic clergy of that borough. I hope that these examples will not be without their due effect in another quarter. We have, I believe, the majority of every religious denomination with us—I mean the dissenting denominations; we have them almost *en masse*, both ministers and laymen; and I believe the only body, the only religious body, which we may not say we have with us as a body, are the members of the Church of England.

The religious bodies.

On this point I will just offer this remark: The clergy of the Church of England have been placed in a most invidious, and, I think, an unfortunate position, by the mode in which their tithe commutation charge was fixed some years ago. My friend Colonel Thompson will recollect it, for he was in Parliament at the time, and protested against the way in which the tithe commutation rent-charge was fixed. He said, with the great foresight he had always shown in the struggle for the repeal of the corn laws, that it would make the clergy of the Church of England parties to the present corn law by fixing

their tithe at a fixed quantity of corn, fluctuating according to the price of the last seven years. Let it be borne in mind, that every other class of the community may be directly compensated for the repeal of the corn laws—I mean every class connected with agriculture—except the clergy. The landlords may be compensated, if prices fall, by an increased quantity of produce, so also may the farmer and the labourer; but the clergy of the Church of England receive a given number of quarters of wheat for their tithe, whatever the price may be. I think, however, we may draw a favourable conclusion, under all the circumstances, from the fact that I believe there has not been one clergyman of the Church of England at all eminent for rank, piety, or learning, who has come out, notwithstanding the strong temptation of personal interest, to advocate the existing corn law. I think that we may take this as a proof of the very strong appeal to justice which this question makes, and perhaps augur also that there is a very strong feeling amongst the great body of the members of the Church of England in favour of free trade in corn.

Well, there is one other quarter in which we have seen the progress of sound principles—I allude to America. We have received the American president's message; we have had also the report of the secretary of the Treasury, and both President Polk and Mr. Secretary Walker have been taking my friend Colonel Thompson's task out of his hands, and lecturing the people of America on the subject of Free Trade. I have never read a better digest of the arguments in favour of Free Trade than that put forth by Mr. Secretary Walker, and addressed to the congress of that country. I augur from all these things that our question is making rapid progress throughout the world, and that we are coming to the consummation of our labours. We are verging now towards the session of Parliament, and I predict that the question will either receive its quietus, or that it will lead to the dissolution of this parliament; and then the next will certainly relieve us from our burden.

Now, many people are found to speculate on what Sir Robert Peel may do in the approaching session of Parliament. It is a very hazardous thing, considering that in one week only you will be as wise as I shall, to venture to make a prediction on this subject. [A cry of 'We are very anxious.'] You are very anxious, no doubt. Well, let us see if we can speculate a little on futurity, and relieve our anxiety. There are three courses open to Sir Robert Peel. He may keep the law as it is; he may totally repeal it; or he may do something between the two by tinkering his scale again, or giving us a fixed duty. Now, I predict that Sir Robert Peel will either keep the law as it is, or he will propose totally to abolish it. And I ground my prediction on this, because these are the only two things that anybody in the country wants him to do. There are some who want to keep protection as it is; others want to get rid of it; but nobody wants anything between the two. He has his choice to make, and I have this opinion of his sagacity, that, if he changes at all, he will change for total repeal. But the question is, 'Will he propose total and immediate repeal?' Now, there, if you please, I will forbear to offer a prediction. But I will venture to give you a reason or two why I think he ought to take total and immediate repeal. I don't think that any class is so much interested in having the corn laws totally and immediately repealed as the farming class. I believe that it is of more importance to the farmers to have the repeal instantaneous, instead of gradual, than to any other class of the community. In fact, I observe, in the report of a recent Oxfordshire protection meeting, given in to-day's paper, that when Lord Norreys was alluding to the probability of Sir Robert Peel abolishing the corn laws gradually, a farmer of the name of Gillatt cried out, 'We had better be drowned outright than ducked to death.' Gentlemen, I used to employ another simile—a very humble one, I admit. I used to say that an old farmer had told me, that if he was going to cut off his sheep-dog's tail, it would be far more humane to cut it off all at once than a piece every day in the week. But now I

think that the farmer's simile in Oxford is the newest and the best that we can use. Nothing could be more easy than to demonstrate that it is the true interest of the farmers, if the corn law is to be abolished, to have it abolished instantly. If the corn law were abolished to-morrow, my firm belief is, that instead of wheat falling, it would have a tendency to rise. That is my firm belief, because speculation has already anticipated Sir Robert Peel, and wheat has fallen in consequence of that apprehension. I believe that, owing to the scarcity everywhere—I mean in all parts of Europe—you could not, if you prayed for it, if you had your own wishing-cap on, and could make your own time and circumstances—I believe, I say, that you could never find such an opportunity for abolishing the corn laws totally and immediately as if it were done next week; for it so happens that the very countries from which, in ordinary times, we have been supplied, have been afflicted, like ourselves, with scarcity—that the countries of Europe are competing with us for the very small surplus existing in America. They have, in fact, anticipated us in that market, and they have left the world's markets so bare of corn, that, whatever your necessities may be, I defy you to have other than high prices of corn during the next twelve months, though the corn law was abolished to-morrow.

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Well, I have now spoken on what may be done. I have told you, too, what I should advocate; but I must say that, whatever is proposed by Sir Robert Peel, we, as Free traders, have but one course to pursue. If he proposes a total and immediate and unconditional repeal, we shall throw up our caps for Sir Robert Peel. If he proposes anything else, then Mr. Villiers will be ready, as he has been on former occasions, to move his amendment for a total and immediate repeal of the corn laws. We are not responsible for what Ministers may do; we are but responsible for the performance of our duty. We don't offer to do impossibilities; but we will do our

utmost to carry out our principles. But, gentlemen, I tell you honestly, I think less of what this Parliament may do; I care less for their opinions, less for the intentions of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, than what may be the opinion of a meeting like this and of the people out of doors. This question will not be carried by Ministers or by the present Parliament; it will be carried, when it is carried, by the will of the nation. We will do nothing that can remove us a hair's breadth from that rock which we have stood upon with so much safety for the last seven years. All other parties have been on a quicksand, and floated about by every wave, by every tide, and by every wind—some floating to us, others, like fragments scattered over the ocean, without rudder or compass; whilst we are upon solid ground, and no temptation, whether of parties or of Ministers, shall ever make us swerve a hair's breadth. I am anxious to hear now, at the last meeting before we go to Parliament—before we enter that arena to which all men's minds will be turned during the next week—I am anxious, not merely that we should all of us understand each other on this question, but that we should be considered as occupying as independent and isolated a position as we did at the first moment of the formation of this League. We have nothing to do with Whigs or Tories; we are stronger than either of them; and if we stick to our principles, we can, if necessary, beat both. And I hope we perfectly understand now, that we have not, in the advocacy of this great question, a single object in view but that which we have honestly avowed from the beginning. Our opponents may charge us with designs to do other things. No, gentlemen, I have never encouraged that. Some of my friends have said, 'When this work is done, you will have some influence in the country; you must do so and so.' I said then, as I say now, 'Every new political principle must have its special advocates, just as every new faith has its martyrs.' It is a mistake to suppose that this organization can be turned to other purposes. It is a mistake to suppose that men, prominent in the advocacy of

the principle of Free Trade, can with the same force and effect identify themselves with any other principle hereafter. It will be enough if the League accomplishes the triumph of the principle we have before us. I have never taken a limited view of the object or scope of this great principle. I have never advocated this question very much as a trader.

But I have been accused of looking too much to material interests. Nevertheless, I can say that I have taken as large and great a view of the effects of this mighty principle as ever did any man who dreamt over it in his own study. I believe that the physical gain will be the smallest gain to humanity from the success of this principle. I look farther; I see in the Free Trade principle that which shall act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation in the universe—drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonism of race, and creed, and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace. I have looked even farther. I have speculated, and probably dreamt, in the dim future—ay, a thousand years hence—I have speculated on what the effect of the triumph of this principle may be. I believe that the effect will be to change the face of the world, so as to introduce a system of government entirely distinct from that which now prevails. I believe that the desire and the motive for large and mighty empires; for gigantic armies and great navies—for those materials which are used for the destruction of life and the desolation of the rewards of labour—will die away; I believe that such things will cease to be necessary, or to be used, when man becomes one family, and freely exchanges the fruits of his labour with his brother man. I believe that, if we could be allowed to reappear on this sublunary scene, we should see, at a far distant period, the governing system of this world revert to something like the municipal system; and I believe that the speculative philosopher of a thousand years hence will date the greatest revolution that ever happened in the world's history from the triumph of the principle which we have met here to advocate. I believe these things; but,

whatever may have been my dreams and speculations, I have never obtruded them upon others. I have never acted upon personal or interested motives in this question; I seek no alliance with parties, or favour from parties, and I will take none; but, having the feeling I have of the sacredness of the principle, I say that I can never agree to tamper with it. I, at least, will never be suspected of doing otherwise than pursuing it disinterestedly, honestly, and resolutely.

X.—AFTER REPEAL—THE LEAGUE DISSOLVES

On December 20th, 1845, Peel had accepted office again upon the failure of Lord John Russell to form an administration. Peel announced his policy of repealing the Corn Laws on January 27th, 1846. The repeal was to be brought about gradually, and was to take final effect in 1849. After twelve nights' debate the resolutions were carried (February 27th) by a majority of 97, and at the end of June the Corn Importation Bill passed in the Lords and received the Royal assent. At this meeting, held in the Town Hall of Manchester on July 4th, the Council of the League decided that the League 'stand conditionally dissolved;' that is to say, that the action of its organization should be suspended so long as no attempt was made to revive protection. When an attempt was threatened by the Derbyites and Disraelites six years later the League was revived, until the danger had passed. The following speech was made by Cobden:—

If this were a meeting for any other purpose than that of business, in the strictest sense of the word, I am quite sure that I should feel more embarrassed at meeting you on this occasion than I have done at any previous time; for I feel myself almost oppressed with the consciousness of the importance of the events we have been passing through lately, and of the great interest which is involved in the present meeting; and I am sure I could not do justice to the feelings which are now affecting me.

We are met here on the present occasion as a meeting of the Council of the League. We have, in the working of this body, as you are aware, an executive committee of gentlemen living in Manchester, and also the Council of the League, consisting of the subscribers of £50 and upwards. The

Executive Council of the League have called you, the Council, together, for the purpose of taking your opinion as to the course we shall now pursue; and I think the importance of that question is such, that I shall confine myself as strictly as possible to business details in what I have to say, because I do not wish to prevent the many gentlemen who have come from distant parts the opportunity of giving their advice and assistance on this occasion. The Executive Council of the League in Manchester have talked over the matter repeatedly, and are now prepared to submit their views; and, as I may as well put you in possession of what the general purport of all the resolutions is, I will just explain the substance of the whole.

We propose to recommend, not that the League shall be absolutely dissolved in the strict sense of the word, and yet we propose to take such steps as amount to a virtual dissolution of the League, unless the protectionist party compel us again to revive our agitation. We propose to ask from you the authority and instruction to wind up and suspend the affairs of the League. We recommend that you should pass a resolution, absolving all those gentlemen who have put their names down to the large guarantee fund, and paid their first instalment, from any further liability. We propose that you shall pass a resolution, authorizing the gentlemen in Manchester, who have acted on the Council of the League, in case they should see any serious efforts made by the monopolists to revive the system of protection, or to induce Parliament to retrace its steps, then to request these gentlemen again to call the League into active existence. Gentlemen, we have thought that the course by which we shall fulfil our duty to the general body of subscribers, and likewise our pledges to the public. We have pledged ourselves not to retire from this agitation, or disband the League, until the corn laws were totally and immediately abolished. We are, therefore, not competent to dissolve this League. At the same time I ought to say, that with reference to our practical operations, it would be exceedingly difficult to draw a line between a total suspension of

the League and a partial suspension. If we continue active operations at all, it must be on a large scale, and at an enormous expense. I do not think you can draw a distinction between £500 a week and nothing. We have been spending the last three years at least £1000 a week. Under these circumstances, I think it is a fair practical question to consider, what can be the object gained if we continue the active agitation of the League. In two years and a half the corn laws will be abolished by an Act now upon the statute-book; and let us entertain the supposition that our efforts in agitation out of doors should be ever so successful, it is hardly possible that in less than two years and a half we should succeed in altering the law which now exists; therefore I do not see that any practical good can result from continuing the agitation in any form whatever.

Now, many people may say, "Are you safe in disbanding this great organization? Are you safe in taking off your uniform (if I may use the expression), of casting aside your weapons of moral warfare? Will not the protectionists gain strength and confidence if they see you abandon the field?" I am of opinion that there is no danger of anything of the kind. I look upon it that the mere boasting and vapouring of a few of the less wise part of the protectionist party may be very well excused by us. It is quite natural that men who felt worsted in an argument, and in all the tactics of political action during the last seven years, should console themselves with the promises of what they will do the next seven years. But I hold that you may as soon abolish Magna Charta, or do away with Trial by Jury, or repeal the Test and Corporation Act, or the Catholic Emancipation Act, as ever re-enact protection as a principle again in this country.

Some people say we go back in this country. I maintain that we never go back after a question has been discussed and sifted as ours has. You have never gone back in any of the great questions; if settled once, they have been settled altogether. People do say that we went back after the Reform

Act was passed. I will tell you what we did. We got hold of a machine which we did not know how to use, and the proper use of which we are now learning, but we never went back. Nobody ever proposed the repeal of one enactment of the Reform Act. Therefore I hope our friends everywhere will bear this in mind; and if they should hear a noble lord, or even a noble duke, talking of what they will do, not let their nervous system be excited or alarmed. They must raise a fresh crop of statesmen to carry out their principles, for we have all the statesmen now on our side of the question. Such being our position, we have very good grounds for congratulation on the present occasion. I confess I hardly know whom to thank, or how to account, for our present position; there has been such a combination of fortunate accidents, that I must confess that I am disposed to thank that Providence which has overruled so many apparently conflicting incidents for this great and mighty good. I believe we, at all events, may say, that, humanly speaking, we owe a debt of gratitude to our gracious Sovereign the Queen. I believe it is not in strict etiquette to allude to our Queen's personal views and feelings in any matter, but it is well known that her Majesty's predilections are strongly in favour of the cause we have been agitating. Then, there is her late first minister; along with our success, we have seen the downfall of that minister. Some people say he has lost office by giving us free trade. Well, if he has lost office, he has gained a country. For my part, I would rather descend into private life with that last measure of his, which led to his discomfiture, in my hand, than mount to the highest pinnacle of human power. Among the statesmen, we owe a debt of gratitude to Lord John Russell. Individually, I believe, we owe to him and his firmness, to his letter, and to his firmness during the intrigues of the last six months in London—I believe we owe it to his individual firmness that we had the support of the Whig aristocracy at all in this measure. I am anxious as an individual on this occasion, that I should lose sight of nobody

to whom the country is indebted for the passing of these measures, because I do feel there has been a disposition to make one of us a great deal more a monopolist in this matter than he deserves. ['No, no.'] I speak of myself, and I say, that when I entered upon this career we found the road very much prepared; the mighty impediments had been removed by the labours of others; we had had men preceding us who had been toiling to beat down great prejudices, and destroy fallacies, and prepare a path for us which we had simply to macadamize to win our way to victory. There are many of these men here around me. I would not forget men who, like the late Mr. Deacon Hume, Mr. Macgregor, and Mr. Porter, in the privacy of their closets, furnished the world with statistics, arguments, and facts, which, after all, have swayed mankind more than any declamation or appeals to the passions can possibly do. There is one man especially whom I wish not to forget: it is Colonel Thompson. Colonel Thompson has made more large pecuniary sacrifices than any man living for Free Trade, and we all know his contributions in an intellectual point of view, which have been invaluable to us—we will not forget the worthy colonel amidst our congratulations amongst each other.

I said I should not detain you with a long speech, and in fact I cannot do it, for I do feel oppressed with the feelings which now pervade my mind. I believe we are at an era which in importance, socially, has not its equal for the last 1800 years. I believe there is no event that has ever happened in the world's history, that in a moral and social point of view—there is no human event that has happened in the world more calculated to promote the enduring interests of humanity than the establishment of the principle of Free Trade—I don't mean in a pecuniary point of view, or as a principle applied to England, but we have a principle established now which is eternal in its truth and universal in its application, and must be applied in all nations and throughout all times, and applied not simply to commerce, but to every item of the tariffs of the

world; and if we are not mistaken in thinking that our principles are true, be assured that those results will follow, and at no very distant period. Why, it is a world's revolution, and nothing else; and every meeting we have held of this League, and this its last meeting probably, may be looked back upon as the germ of a movement which will ultimately comprehend the whole world in its embrace. I see and feel, and have always felt, the great social and moral importance of this great question. I believe many who have taken an active part in this question have been influenced solely by its moral and social consequences.

We have amongst us on this occasion a gentleman who has come from a neighbouring country, France, an eloquent advocate of Free Trade there, Mons. Duffour Dubergier, the Mayor of Bordeaux. It is gratifying that we should attract by a kindred sympathy the visit to our meeting of so distinguished a man; and I know he will go back, not with fresh emotions of sympathy towards our cause, for those he has entertained already, but I have no doubt he will go back inspirited by what he sees here, and that he will be anxious that France should not stand long apart from England in this glorious career, but that we join hand to hand in setting nations the example of the mutual advantages of peace and prosperity.

Well, this League must dissolve—it must suspend. Our elements must be scattered. I cannot help saying personally for myself, that the greatest pleasure I have found in the course of those proceedings has been in the acquaintances I have formed with, and the kindness I have received from, the men connected with this association. If I could ever have despaired of this country, after the acquaintances which I have made with the men in connection with this question—men who will be found the salt of this land in whatever good is to be accomplished—having known what I do of my fellow-countrymen in this agitation, I shall never despair of this moral power to conduct this good ship through whatever storm may arise, which will save us from anarchy at one end or tyranny at the

other end of society. I am going to be egotistical; but I will say that, so far as I myself am concerned—so far as my tastes go—a release from an active life of agitation will not be unacceptable to me. I ought, in order to enjoy the full pleasure of an agitator, to be differently constituted; and I don't think nature ever intended me for that line. I say it most unaffectedly, that I entered upon the career of agitation without the slightest idea that it would ever have conducted me to the point to which I have arrived. I had not the most distant idea of it. I don't think circumstances would have warranted myself in taking the step eight years ago, if I could have seen what it would lead to. We got into the groove, and were pushed along, and we found ourselves carrying a train of good hardy spirits who would not leave us; and having given us their support, we were impelled forward in the groove at an accelerated speed, and with a constantly increased sympathy.

Well, for myself, you will hardly credit it, when I say that with regard to myself, I have precisely the same feeling now with respect to the ordeal of public meetings that I had when I began this agitation. It is a matter of great reluctance and difficulty for me to appear before an audience at all. Many people would think that we had our reward in the applause and *éclat* of public meetings; but I declare upon my honour that it is not so with me, for the inherent reluctance I have to address public meetings is so great, that I don't even get up to present a petition in the House of Commons without reluctance. I therefore hope I may be believed when I say that if this agitation terminates now, it will be very acceptable to my feelings; but if there should be the same necessity, the same feeling which has impelled me to take the part I have will impel me to a new agitation—ay, and with tenfold more vigour, after having had a little time to recruit my strength.

We are going to dissolve; those good spirits must disband, and I am not quite sure that it is not wise and proper that it should be so. We have been kept together for seven years without one single dispute, without anything to cause the

slightest alienation. We have had the bond of freemasonry and brotherhood so closely knit about us, that I don't think there has been a keen word in the happy family of the Anti-Corn-Law League. That is the spirit in which we should break off. Were we to continue our agitation, when the object for which we associated is gone, I am afraid that the demon of discord would be getting in among us. It is in nature so. It is in our moral nature necessary that when an organized body has performed its functions, it must pass into a new state of existence, and become differently organized. We are dispersing our elements to be ready for any other good work, and it is nothing but good works that will be attempted by good Leaguers. Our body will, so to say, perish ; but our spirit is abroad, and will pervade all the nations of the earth. It will pervade all the nations of the earth because it is the spirit of truth and justice, and because it is the spirit of peace and good-will amongst men.

XI.—FREE TRADE AND REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS

Speech by Richard Cobden at Leeds, December 18, 1849

In 1847, Cobden was returned unopposed for the West Riding of Yorkshire, and sat for that constituency for nearly ten years. After the repeal of the corn laws he made a tour on the Continent, where he preached his gospel of free trade, peace, and goodwill among nations. In 1849 there were signs of a protectionist reaction, which took the form of an agitation partly for a five shilling duty on corn, partly for the relief of the rates on agricultural land. Cobden thereupon visited his constituency and delivered a great speech at Leeds, in the Music Hall, Albion Street, to an audience of about 1200 people. The speech, which occupied about four columns of the *Times* of December 20th, is reproduced here with some abbreviations.

There is a peculiar advantage in members of the House of Commons coming in contact with the people, and especially with their own constituencies, from time to time. It enables us to take their judgment upon the course which we, their representatives, have followed in times past; and, what is equally important, it enables us to confer with them as to the proper line of conduct we should pursue in future. I was, therefore, anxious to-night to have had the opportunity of listening, at greater length, to the speeches of the inhabitants of Leeds; and I sincerely regret that my friend, Mr. Baines, and other gentlemen who have spoken, should have curtailed their remarks out of consideration for me, or a desire that I should be heard addressing you instead of them. I think more good would have arisen if they had favoured us, at greater length, with their views and opinions upon the important questions

now before us. Amongst the questions which have been launched this evening by our worthy chairman, is one which I fondly hoped I should never again have had the necessity of speaking upon—I mean the old, worn-out, the old disgusting question of protection. Why, I thought it was dead and buried years ago. It is now eleven years this very month, and I believe this very week, since the first great meeting was held in Manchester, from which originated the Anti-Corn-law League. On that occasion, in December, 1838, two hundred persons from all parts of the kingdom assembled, and many gentlemen here present were at the meeting. For seven years afterwards there was a continual agitation of the free-trade question throughout the country, and I believe nearly 2000 public meetings were held upon it in every part of the kingdom. Hundreds of tons' weight of tracts were printed and distributed upon the subject; debate after debate took place upon it in Parliament—sometimes scarcely anything else was debated there for months—and now, at the end of eleven years, we are told that we are to have this question up again for discussion. And why, and on what ground? Amongst other pleas why we should have this question again re-agitated is, that the agriculturists were betrayed, and protection was suddenly abandoned, after seven years of discussion only! Now, gentlemen, so far as I am concerned, I have allowed certain people to go about talking in the country, and talking in the House of Commons, without ever having condescended to answer them. Nay, I candidly confess that I felt the most supreme contempt for all they said. I viewed it as nothing but the contortions of a body that had lost its head; just as we read of unfortunate criminals whose limbs writhe and move by a sort of spasmodic action after they have been decapitated. I thought their party, having lost its brains, had still some muscular action left in it, but I never believed it was to be treated again as a sentient intelligent body, worthy the holding a discussion with in this country.

The revival of protection.

But, I have been told, and told by those in whose

judgment I have confidence, that we have allowed our opponents to go unanswered too long, and that there is, amongst a very large portion of the farming class in this country, a belief that, from our silence, protection is gaining ground again in this country. Where is the proof of reaction? I admit that, in some of our rural villages, where men—or rather, we ought to call them, old women—still put horse-shoes over their stable doors to keep the witches from their horses, there may be found men who will gape and cheer when told that we are going back to protection. But I think there is somebody else to be consulted before they put on another bread-tax; and amongst other parties to be consulted, I calculate the West Riding will have a voice in it. Now, where is the proof of reaction in the West Riding? We have in this Riding—the population which I have the honour to represent—about 1,400,000 souls, which is about one-twelfth part of the whole population of England, and a far larger proportion of its wealth, intelligence, and productive industry. Well, I presume this community is to have a voice in this question of the bread-tax. In answer to these village heroes, these men, who, when they have put their parish in a turmoil, that vastly resembles a storm in a tea-pot, fancy the whole of England gathered together, when it is nothing but an agitation of the squire, his agent, and probably a parson and a doctor, in answer to these protectionist noodles, and their organs of the press, who are continually telling the farmers, what they have been telling them now for eleven years, that they are going to have protection and keep it, I tell them they never shall have one farthing's worth of protection. These are only a couple of predictions. Some time or other, I presume, the farmers will wish to have friends who tell them the truth. Whenever the time comes when the farmers understand who it is who has been telling them the truth—those who say they are going to have protection, or those who say from this platform they never shall have one farthing more of corn law—when that time comes, then I think the age of

delusion will be over in the agricultural districts. I want to know how long they will require before they make up their minds whether I am right, or those squires are right. The time will come. I give them seven years, if they like; only let it be understood, that they remember the promise made on the one side by their own leaders, and here by the men of the West Riding; and then I calculate the farmers will throw off their foolish blind guides, and co-operate with those who have proved themselves to have some sense and foresight in the matter. What is it these landlords want to do with you? There is no disguise about the matter now. When we were agitating the corn law question before, they said their object was plenty, the same as ours; but what is their cry now? Why, they complain that you get the quartern loaf too cheap, and they want to raise the price of it to you; and that is the only business they have in hand. You get a couple of stones of decent flour now for 3*s.*; two or three years ago you paid 4*s.* for a single stone. Well, those landlords were satisfied when you were paying 4*s.* a stone for flour, and now they are dissatisfied when you get two stones for 3*s.*, and they want to go back to the 4*s.* for the one stone. Will you let them? [Cries of 'No, no.'] No; you are not Yorkshiremen if you will. We are told that all parts of the country are in distress and dissatisfaction. That is the old story again. Because the landlords feel a little uneasy—they who have been so long accustomed to consider themselves the whole community—(I believe many of them think so)—they get up and say the whole community is suffering from extreme distress.

The cheaper loaf.

Now, I say, the West Riding of Yorkshire has been growing more prosperous, and suffering less and less distress, in proportion as the price of corn, of which those landlords complain, has become more moderate; and, if they can ever return—if they can ever succeed in returning again to the price I have mentioned, 4*s.* for the stone of flour, you will have your town swarming with paupers, your mills stopping

work, and every class in this community suffering distress, as they were in 1842. And that is what they want to bring you back to; for, having looked into the matter with attention for ten years past, I declare that I find no period since the war when the manufacturing interest has been, for two years together, in a state of moderate prosperity, but the landlord class in this country have been up in arms, and declaring they were ruined, and calling out for those measures which, if successful, must again throw the manufacturing community into that state of distress from which they had emerged; and, if we look back to the debates in Parliament, we find the landlords always assuming, that, because they were in distress all the community were in distress likewise. I remember, in 1822, reading in the debates in the House of Commons, that Lord Castlereagh himself was obliged to remind the landlords of that day, that, though they were suffering some inconveniences from the price of corn, the manufacturing interest was eminently prosperous. Do we hear complaints now from Manchester, Lancashire, or Yorkshire, Lanark, Nottingham, Staffordshire, Leicester, or Derbyshire? No, they have not been for many years past, both capitalists and labourers, in a more healthy state than they are at this moment. Is the revenue falling off? No, the revenue is flourishing, too. Where, then, are the signs and symptoms of national distress? It is the danger of rents and tithes. Well, now, we are told by these protectionist scribes that there is a reaction, because there have been two or three elections for places which have returned protectionists, and for which formerly they say, free-traders sat. They talk of Kidderminster and Reading. That opens up another question. I tell them that the decision of such places as Reading and Kidderminster will not have a feather's weight in the scale, in deciding this question of the bread-tax. Let them see a member returned for any one of the metropolitan districts, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Leeds, West Riding, Halifax, Bradford, Huddersfield. Let any one of

these large communities, where the constituencies are free and beyond corruption and coercion—let them but return one man pledged to restore one shilling of the corn laws from any one of those great constituencies, then I will admit that there is reaction. Why, I feel so anxious that the farming class of this country should be emancipated from this delusion, and placed in a position to cultivate their land, and to come to a proper adjustment with their landlords, and that they shall not be carried away after this *ignis fatuus* any longer, that, I declare, if they will allow me to offer a test—which may be called a national test—and if they will promise to abide by it, I will promise to accept the Chiltern Hundreds at the opening of Parliament, and come down for re-election ; and, if they can return a member for the West Riding of Yorkshire pledged to restore one shilling of corn law, in any shape whatever, then I will give up the whole question.

But do not let them talk to us about these petty boroughs, and, still less, do not let them talk to us about Ireland. I see these men's reliance; I have long seen symptoms of this unholy alliance between the protectionist part of the House of Commons and the landlordism of Ireland the very name of which stinks in the nostrils, not only of the people of England, but of the whole civilized world. Yes, I see that the landlords of Ireland are putting forth their strength, and mustering their factions, to restore protection ; and, I am told, upon very good authority, that, let a dissolution take place the next year, and ninety at least out of the one hundred and five Irish members would come up pledged to restore the corn law. Well, I say, if the whole of them came up to restore the corn law, they could not do it.

The Irish landlords.

That, again, opens up another question—the question of the representation of the people. The representation of Ireland is a mockery and a fraud—rotten, rotten to the very core. Why, I do not believe, after giving some attention to the matter, that there are more *bonâ fide* voters on the register of Ireland at this moment, entitled to vote, than the 37,000

electors that are upon the register of the West Riding of Yorkshire. It is acknowledged by all parties; nobody will deny it: but I tell the men nominated by landlords, and sent up under pretence of representing the 8,000,000 of the people of Ireland, they shall not decide the question of your bread, and the bread of the people of England. No; they very much mistake the temper of this people if they think that we will submit to a famine law at the hands of the landlord class of Ireland, who have not only brought their own people to beggary, and ruin, and starvation, but they have beggared and ruined themselves at the same time. What were we doing last session? One half of our time was spent either in caring for the paupers of Ireland, or in passing laws to enable the landlords of that country to be extricated, by extra-judicial means, from ruin and bankruptcy, brought on by their own improvidence. And now, what is this class—this bankrupt landlord class—aiming at? Is it to pass a law to prevent corn being brought to Ireland? No, that is not their immediate object; because, in ordinary times, you cannot have Ireland importing food from abroad, for they have nothing with which to pay for it. But if England subscribes its £8,000,000 to fill up the void of starvation in that country, then, indeed, you may buy the Indian corn from America to feed the people. But in ordinary times, Ireland must be an exporter of corn; and the object of the landlords of Ireland is to prevent you, the people of England, from getting corn from America and Russia, in order that you may be forced to go for corn from Ireland, and thus enable them to extort increased rents from their beggared tenantry. Do they think that Englishmen and Yorkshiremen are going to submit to a transaction like this? No; let the English landlords—that portion of them who are entering upon this new crusade against your bread-basket—let the English landlords enter this unholy alliauce with the bankrupt and pauperized landlords of Ireland, and become themselves equally degraded in the eyes of the world—and I much mistake the temper of

Englishmen, especially of Yorkshiremen, if you do not make such an example of the conspirators as will make them regret the day that they ever attempted it. Now, we have given them fair notice that we know what they are about, and what their objects are, and that we are perfectly wide awake in Yorkshire. We do not intend that they shall have one shilling more of protection. And something else we do not intend they shall have. There is another thing they are going to do—if we will let them—and which I always suspected they would do. They will try to extort it from us in some other shape: and so the new dodge is, that they shall put their taxes off their shoulders on to yours.

There is a society formed in Buckinghamshire, I believe, for the relief of burdens upon real property. Well, I belong to another association; and it is to relieve the burdens of those who have no property. Their plan is this—that the burdens hitherto put upon the land shall henceforth be paid out of the taxes wrung from the agricultural labourer upon his ounce of tea, and the half-starved needle-woman in London upon her half-pound of sugar. That is the thing, undisguised, and stripped of the transparent veil of mystification that is thrown over it by those new champions of the agricultural interest, who talk to us in strange parables anything but English —I hardly know whether it is Hebrew, or what it is. Yes, all their mystification amounts to this, that the £12,000,000 of local taxes for poor rates, highway rates, church rates, and the rest, shall be, half of them, if they cannot get the whole—they had rather put the whole upon your shoulders—shall be taken off the land, and put upon the Consolidated Fund; that is, taken out of the taxes raised upon the necessaries and comforts of the masses of the people. Well, I tell them I have had my eye upon them from the first, and always expected it; and, mind you, I am afraid we shall have some people joining in this from whom I expected better things. Allusion has been made to-night to my friend Mr. Gisborne, and no one has a higher

Agricultural land and local rates.

opinion of his sterling character and racy talent than I have; but, I think, he has got a twist upon this subject of the burdens of real property. He asked, in the speech to which my friend has referred, 'By what right or justice should the whole of these local taxes be laid upon the real property of the country?' My first answer to him is this: Because those burdens have been borne by the real property of the country from two to three centuries at the least. Poor rates have been nearly three centuries borne by the real property of the country, and the others are nearly as old as our Saxon institutions. Well, these taxes having been borne by the real property of the country for three centuries, this property has changed hands, either by transfer, succession, or in trust, at least a dozen times; the charges have been endorsed upon the title-deeds, and the property has been bought or inherited at so much less in consequence of those charges, and, therefore, the present owner of real property has no right to exemption from those burdens, having bought the property knowing it to be subject to those burdens, and having paid less in consequence. That is my first answer, and I think it is sufficient. But I have another. The poor have the first right to a subsistence from the land, and there is no other security so good as the land itself. Other kinds of property may take wings and fly away. Movable property has very often been known to 'flit' the day before quarter-day; capital employed in trade may be lost in an unsuccessful venture in China; wages sometimes disappear altogether: and, therefore, the real and true security to which the people of this country should look is in the soil itself.

But I have another reason why this property should bear those local burdens, and it is this—it is the only property which not only does not diminish in value, but, in a country growing in population and advancing in prosperity, it always increases in value, and without any help from the owners. These gentlemen complain that those rates have increased in amount during a recent period. I will admit, if they like,

that those local rates have increased. During the last one hundred years they have increased, I will say, seven millions of money. That is taking an outside view. Well, but the real property upon which those rates are levied—the lands and houses of this country—has increased in value four times as much; and, therefore, they stand in an infinitely better situation now, paying twelve millions of local rates, than ever they did at any former period in the history of this country.

Now, I warn the landlords against the attempt to enter the lists in this country with the whole mass of the population —I warn them, in these days, and in the temper and spirit of the time, from entering upon a new conflict with this population, to try and put on the shoulders of this already overburdened people those taxes which of right belong to them as a class. Let them bear in mind what Sir Charles Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told us in the last session of Parliament—that, even including these local rates, and including what they pay of the general taxation of the country, the landed proprietors pay a less amount of taxation, in proportion to the whole amount raised in this country, than any other people of Europe. [A voice: 'They ought to pay it all.'] Well, I tell them that if they renew the struggle with the whole population of this country, whether for the resumption of the bread-tax, or to transfer the burdens which in justice belong to them, to the shoulders of the rest of the community, they will have the question re-agitated in a very different spirit from what it was before. Let them take my word for it, they will never have another agitation carried on with that subserviency to politico-economical argument which was observed by the Anti-Corn-Law League. It cost me some argument, as my friends know, to prevent the League from going into other topics; but, let another agitation arise, a serious one, such as these individuals would try to persuade their followers to enter upon—let it be seen that they bring the Parliament into such a state of confusion that Government is compelled to dissolve—let it be

A warning to landlords.

seen that a protectionist statesman, like Lord Stanley, is prepared to get into the saddle, and to spur over the country with his haughty paces—and they will hear this question argued in a very different manner from what it was before. They will have the whole aristocratic system, under which the country has been governed for the last 150 years, torn to pieces; they will have the law of primogeniture, and the whole feudal system which exists in this country, and exists on sufferance only after it had been abolished everywhere else—they will have these questions brought up in a way which they, weak and foolish men, little expect; and let them once enter the list again, either for another corn law, or for the transference of this taxation upon your shoulders, and I give them my word of promise that they will come out of the conflict right happy to abandon not only the corn law and any taxation which they are going to try to avoid, but they will be glad to escape by a composition of much heavier terms than that. Bear in mind, when I speak of this question, I speak of the landlords, and not of the farmers. I treated, on a former occasion, most tenderly the landlord class. I will tell you why I did so. I always had more faith in the proprietors than the farmers for repealing the corn laws; and therefore, I never trod heavily on the toes of the landlords; but if this question is to be revived again by the landlord class, I promise them that I will probe the whole question to the bottom, and there shall not be a farmer, however dull he may be, but shall understand right well that they are humbugs who tell them, that, in questions of rent and the revision of taxation, landowners and farmers, forsooth, row in the same boat; and I will undertake to satisfy you that when they talk of the difficulty of cultivating the land under this system of free trade, there is no difficulty whatever, provided the landlords and tenants come to an adjustment according to the present and future price of corn.

I speak from experience. I stand before you—you may perhaps be surprised to hear it—but I stand before you as

one of the humblest members of the much-talked-of landlord interest. I happen to be possessed of a very small estate in Western Sussex, very near to the Duke of Richmond, and I am next-door neighbour to Lord Egmont, who is the most notorious personage I know for making foolish speeches at agricultural meetings, and for overrunning his neighbours' land as well as his own with game. I wish, instead of roaming about the country, calling me a republican, at protection meetings, that Lord Egmont would go down to West Sussex, and cause some of those rabbits and hares to be destroyed which give some humble people, on land of mine, the trouble of killing for him. Being myself a landlord, and possessing land right in the midst of the greatest landed proprietors, and the most ferocious protectionists, I have had an opportunity of testing how far it is practicable by reasonable arrangements with tenants—I have two of them, they are very small, but they are sufficient to test the principle—I have had the opportunity of seeing how far it is practicable, with tenants upon land, not of first-rate quality, to secure them, in future, as good prospects as in times past, and under free trade, as well as under protection. I am not going to tell you how I did it; but I promise, before the meeting of Parliament, I will go into Buckinghamshire, I will have a public meeting at Buckingham or at Aylesbury, and will explain the whole case, and give every particular—how the landlord, instead of bawling for protection, can, by the commonest exercise of judgment, justice, and policy, enable the whole of his land to be cultivated, just as it was before, and every farmer and labourer to be in better spirits in future than in time past.[1]

Now, I am going into Buckinghamshire to tell the farmers the whole case; and I will tell the whole case and a little more; but I am not going to trouble you with it now. I will turn to the question of the general taxation of the country. For myself, I can conscientiously declare that, from the moment I returned from the Continent, two years since, I have always

[1] See Cobden's speech at Aylesbury, January 9, 1853.

had the present position of the country in view. I have always contemplated a transition state, when there would be pinching and suffering in the agricultural class, in passing from a vicious system to a sound one; for you cannot be restored from bad health to good, without going through a process of languor and suffering; and my great aim has been, from the moment I returned from the Continent, to try to ease that transition by reducing the expenditure of the country, feeling that, if you could, within a few years, cause a large reduction in the expenditure of the State, you will give such an impetus to trade and commerce, and so improve the condition of the mass of the people, that you would aid very materially in relieving the farmers and labourers from the inconvenience of that transition state, from which they cannot escape. It was with that view that I preferred my budget, and advocated the reduction of our armaments: it is with that view, coupled with higher motives, that I have recommended arbitration treaties, to render unnecessary the vast amount of armaments which are kept up between civilized countries. It is with that view —the view of largely reducing the expenditure of the State, and giving relief, especially to the agricultural classes—that I have made myself the object of the sarcasms of those very parties, by going to Paris, to attend peace meetings. It is with that view that I have directed attention to our colonies, showing how you might be carrying out the principle of Free Trade, give to the colonies self-government, and charge them, at the same time, with the expense of their own government. There is not one of these objects that I have taken in hand, in which I have not had, for a paramount motive, serving of the agricultural class, in this transition state from Protection to Free Trade.

Reasons for retrenchment and reduction of armaments.

How, hitherto, have I been requited by them? Have I had a single aid from any of them? No. At the close of last Parliament I was taunted by their leader on account of my want of success. Have you heard them say one word about

the reduction of the expenditure of the country? Has their leader—if I may call him so, for they have a plurality—has he ever said one word to indicate the slightest wish that they desired to reduce the expenditure? No. I am convinced that it would be distasteful to the landlord party to have a general reduction of the expenditure, particularly in that great preserve of the landlord class for their younger sons, the army and navy. I believe they are averse to retrenchment—at least, they have done nothing to aid those who wished to accomplish it; and now, I tell them again, as I told them before from this great metropolis of industry, that to a farthing of protection to agriculture they shall not go. And if they will make us pay high taxes to keep up useless establishments, and unnecessary sinecures, and wasteful expenditure, in every department of the State, why, they shall pay their share of that taxation, with wheat at 40*s.* per quarter.

Policy of the landlords.

Gentlemen, allusion has been made to our expenditure for the army, navy, and ordnance. Mr. Marshall has referred to the case of our colonies. He was unfortunate in speaking when the crowd was at the door; but I hope that his facts and his arguments will fully appear reported in the papers, because they went to the very bottom of this question. You cannot materially reduce your expenditure, unless you relieve yourself from the unnecessary waste of public money in the colonies. Sir Robert Peel has, again and again, in his budget speeches, pointed out clearly the vast expenditure in our colonies. He has, again and again, said that two-thirds of our army are either necessary for garrisons in our colonies, or else to supply depôts at home to furnish relief for those retiring; or else that thousands of men may be always on the wide ocean, visiting one place or another. He has pointed that out time after time; and he has repeated these things so often, that I have long been of opinion that Sir Robert Peel is anxious to diminish public taxation, by preventing this waste of national resources. He

Military waste in the colonies.

saw the mischief; he would like public opinion to be directed to it; and, if public opinion enabled him to effect a change, I am sure that Sir Robert Peel is the man who would like to accomplish it.

You send drilled Englishmen to serve as policemen to Englishmen in Australia, New Zealand, and the Cape of Good Hope. Do not you think that Englishmen there are quite capable of taking care of themselves, without putting you to the expense of doing it? What have you been doing lately? You have spent two millions of money, in the last four years, to defend the settlers of the Cape of Good Hope against the inroads of the barbarous tribes of Caffres. What is taking place at this very moment? Why, these very men, whom you have treated as children, incapable of defending themselves against a few untaught savages—they have proclaimed your own governor in a state of siege, invested your own troops, refused to allow them even provisions, and sent away a ship under the colours of the Queen; and, in their speeches and letters, the leaders of the anti-convict movement do not hesitate to declare that they are ready to defend their country, if necessary, against the whole force of the English empire. Do not you think there is sufficient pluck about them to defend themselves against a few untutored savages? The same thing is going on in Australia. They quote the example of America; and some of these people are holding their great meetings on the 4th of July, the anniversary of American independence. I do not respect them the less—I respect them the more. I think they would be unworthy of the name of Englishmen, if they did not stand up against their country being made the cesspool for our convict population. But what I want to show is this: that there is not the shadow of pretence for requiring our armies to defend them.

But, besides the colonies, we keep up an enormous amount of force against foreign countries, which, I think, may be diminished; and, I believe, all other countries would be willing to diminish their armed forces, provided a fair and

reasonable proposition had been made by our Government to the French Government, to reduce our armaments, if they will reduce in the same proportion. No; they do not do so; but we ferret about, and find some new man-of-war in the French dockyard about to be built, or some new 32-pounder gun going to be made, instead of an old 24-pounder, and we set to work, and make that a reason for increasing our armaments. But, do you think your honourable member here would conduct his business in such a way as that? Do you not think, if he saw another person in the same branch of business, conducting it with a large amount of waste, which threatened both with destruction; and, if he knew that the work was profitless to the individual who began the system, do you not think that, if he found a rival in his business entering upon such a career as that, he would go and say to him, 'You are entering upon a system which compels me to do the same, and it will lead us both into the *Gazette*, if we don't stop it. Do you not think that we had better abandon it?' Now, this very day, I believe, there has been some sort of consultation, some feeling of pulses, between the directors of two rival railroads, to prevent that waste and competition to which they had been subjected by acting upon the principle which we have adopted in regard to foreign armaments. It is not for protecting ourselves against pirates, or barbarous powers, that you keep those powerful armaments. It is that you may keep upon a level with another nation, whom you are taught to imagine is ready to pounce upon you, like a red Indian, the moment he finds you without your armour on or your sword by your side. I think it is a great mistake to suppose that, in order that you may display a great deal of power to the world, all the power should be put into the shape of cannons, muskets, and ships of war. Do not you think that, in these times of industry, when wealth and commerce are the real tests of a nation's power, coupled with worth and intelligence—do you not see that, if you beat your iron into ploughshares and pruning-hooks, instead of putting it into

swords and spears, it will be equally productive of power, and of far more force, if brought into collision with another country, than if you put all your iron into spears and swords? It is not always necessary to hold up a scarecrow to frighten your neighbours. I believe a civilized nation will estimate the power of a country, not by the amount laid out in armaments, which may perhaps be the means of weakening that power, but it will measure your strength by your latent resources—what margin of taxation you have that you can impose in case of necessity, greater than another country, to which you are about to be opposed—what is the spirit of the people, as having confidence in the institutions or government under which they live—what is the general intelligence of the people—what is, in every respect, their situation and capacity to make an effort, in case an effort were required. These will be the tests which intelligent people will apply to countries; not what amount of horse, foot, and artillery, or how many ships you have afloat.

The real tests of a nation's power.

Look to America. The United States has only one line-of-battle ship afloat at this moment; and very often she has not one. She keeps a number of small vessels, and always in activity—never allowing three or four to stay in harbour, as ours are, but always running about to see if her merchant ships require assistance. With only 8500 soldiers—for that is all her force—and with but one line-of-battle ship afloat—is not America at any time prepared to take her stand in the face of France with 500,000 troops, the finest in the world, and with a navy three times as large as the American navy? Is not the United States always able to take the position of equality? and has she not been even taking very high ground? And we see that the French, with 500,000 soldiers, have brought their finances into an almost hopeless state, and they dare not come into collision with a country so lightly taxed, and with so much elasticity, as the United States; and if

Example of the United States.

all the Governments of Europe continue this policy, and if the United States pursues hers, I only hope their Government may not assume that arrogant tone which it may assume towards every Government in Europe, broken down as each is by the load of debt and taxes, which are the result of the hideous system to which I have referred. These are the reasons, I have said, and I say again, why you may return with safety to the expenditure of 1835.[1]

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I am anxious to see this extension of the suffrage accelerated in every possible way: and I think I have always given every possible evidence of my sincerity by direct votes in the House of Commons, and outside the House by urging men to qualify themselves, and use every means to get a vote. I do it, because I believe the extension of the franchise gives us a better guarantee not only for the safety of our institutions, but for the just administration of our public affairs; and I have latterly felt another motive for wishing for an extension of the franchise, in what I have seen going on upon the Continent within the last eighteen months, which has convinced me that the great masses of mankind are disposed for peace between nations. You have the fact brought out in strong relief that the people themselves, however they may be troubled with internal convulsions, have no desire to go abroad and molest their neighbours. You have seen Louis Philippe driven from the throne. We were told that he kept the French nation at peace; but we find the masses of the people of France only anxious to remain at home, and diminish, if possible, the pressure of taxation.

Democracy and self-government make for peace.

Where do we look for the gathering cloud of war? Where do we see it rising? Why, from the black despotism of the North, where one man wields the destinies of 40,000,000 of serfs. If we want to know where is the second danger of war

[1] Cobden went on to recommend an extension of the suffrage, a redistribution of seats and shorter parliaments.

and disturbance, it is in that province of Russia — that miserable and degraded country, Austria—next in the stage of despotism and barbarism, and there you see again the greatest danger of war ; but in proportion as you find the population governing themselves—as in England, in France, or in America —there you will find that war is not the disposition of the people, and that if Government desire it, the people would put a check upon it. Therefore, for the security of liberty, and also, as I believe, that the people of every country, as they acquire political power, will cultivate the arts of peace, and check the desire of their governments to go to war—it is on these grounds that I wish to see a wide extension of the suffrage, and liberty prevail over despotism throughout the world.

XII.—THE TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE

This speech was delivered on April 22nd, 1852, by Milner Gibson, in bringing forward three resolutions for the repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge: (1) 'That such financial arrangements ought to be made as will enable Parliament to dispense with the duty on paper as early as may be, with reference to the security of the public revenue;' (2) 'That the newspaper stamp ought to be abolished;' and (3) 'That the tax on advertisements ought to be repealed.' On the adjourned debate (May 12th) these three resolutions were defeated by majorities of 88, 99, and 65. Milner Gibson was supported by Cobden and Hume. Mr. Gladstone made a very interesting speech, but did not vote. Two years before Disraeli had supported a proposition for the repeal of the paper duty. Now as Chancellor of the Exchequer he opposed it. Milner Gibson's speech, as it appears in Hansard, is diffuse and somewhat loosely constructed. It has been carefully edited, and a good deal of dead or redundant matter omitted. The speech is full of historical interest, especially to paper manufacturers, printers, and publishers.

In bringing forward this question I would mention to the Government that I do not represent any suffering interest. Neither papermakers, nor newspaper proprietors, nor the publishers of cheap literature do I profess to represent on this occasion. My desire is simply to represent what I believe to be the public interest; and if it be alleged as an answer to the case I am about to submit, that particular papermakers are not in favour of the repeal of the tax, and that particular newspaper proprietors would rather retain the stamp duty as it is now, I beg to state that I am about to ask the House to repeal this tax solely on public grounds.

The first proposal that I shall make has reference to the simple question of the paper duty; and I would beg to remind

the House that in submitting this general motion for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, I do not ask gentlemen to commit themselves to a large reduction of taxation at this moment. I do not ask them to agree to any simple motion which embodies the three propositions—namely, the repeal of taxes on paper, advertisements, and stamps. I intend to ask their opinion on each proposition separately, so that any gentleman who is not favourable to the repeal of the newspaper stamp, but is to that of the paper duty, will be at liberty to vote for the latter proposition, and withhold his vote from the former. My own opinion undoubtedly is that all these three resolutions should be carried; but I shall submit them to the House separately, and take a separate division upon each. Let no gentleman, therefore, understand that he is committing himself to any immediate large reduction of taxation in agreeing to one or other of the resolutions that I shall propose.

In regard to the first resolution, the duty on paper, I am only asking the House to agree with a resolution which the Commission on Excise Duties came to in the year 1834, that the duty on paper, in conjunction with two other duties, should in the end, on moral and general and commercial grounds, be totally repealed. Now, the motion I have submitted is headed with a species of preamble. It speaks of the injurious policy of deriving revenue from taxes on knowledge. But before I go to the effect of the paper duty in preventing the diffusion of knowledge, I must allude to the oppressive regulations under which the manufacturers of paper labour, to the bad effect of the paper duty in obstructing the improvement in the manufacture of paper, in hindering the employment of labour, and in preventing our becoming an exporting country in the article of paper.

The paper duty.

If I were to omit these points, I should be considered not to do justice to the subject in hand. I am quite aware that to complain of excise regulations is after all but a

complaint against the whole of your excise system. I admit that. But what I maintain is that no case can be made out so strong, in regard to the manufacture itself, and the employment of labour on any article subject to excise duty, as can be made out with reference to paper. There are gentlemen far better acquainted with all the many details of the vexatious regulations which the excise, for the purpose of protecting the revenue, is obliged to carry out;[1] but of this I will remind the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that they are not sufficient to protect the honest manufacturer from fraudulent paper manufacturers. Large quantities of paper come into the market which have never paid the duty, and compete with the article produced by the fair and honest manufacturer who has paid the duty. This is important, because if you relax these regulations, in that very relaxation you conceive a new danger by enabling manufacturers the more easily to bring paper into the market which has never paid the duty. Bear in mind that these regulations are almost at the instance of the manufacturers themselves, as being necessary to protect them from the competition of fraudulent dealers.

Commercial effects of the excise regulations.

With regard to the employment of labour, as I address a Government that especially cares for the agricultural interest, let me remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the manufacture of paper is one of our rural manufactures, and that the clear streams of Buckinghamshire[2] are precisely those best adapted for the manufacture of paper. But the excise duty on paper has shut up all the paper mills on the Buckinghamshire streams. The paper manufacturers are gradually becoming more and more reduced in numbers, a fact which shows that the excise system

Effect of paper duty on rural industry.

[1] Some interesting illustrations were given later in the debate on May 12th by Cowan, the member for Edinburgh, himself a paper manufacturer.

[2] Disraeli, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was member for Buckinghamshire.

and these regulations have created a congestion of capital, and are bringing the whole business into the hands of a few great capitalists. I will take the liberty of reading a letter which the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has received from Mr. Herbert Ingram, the proprietor of the *Illustrated London News* :—

'. . . I take the liberty of addressing you upon a subject of national importance . . . that of the excise duty on paper, with the whole effect of which I am particularly acquainted, not only as a newspaper proprietor, but also as an extensive manufacturer and consumer of paper. Your long and honourable connection with literature, and the high position which you now occupy in the councils of her Majesty, justify me in believing that you will do me the honour to listen to the facts which I proceed to lay before you in explanation of the practical injuries inflicted by this impost—injuries which were, I am certain, never contemplated when the tax was first levied. I need scarcely explain to you that when paper is first made it is wet ; that as the excise duty is levied upon the weight, the paper manufacturer naturally dries the paper that it may be as light as possible when he is favoured with the visits of the excise officer ; and that after it has been so dried and paid the duty, it must be wetted again before it can be used in the printing-office. The double process of drying and wetting, besides being attended by a very considerable expense for labour, naturally damages the quality of the paper, and, moreover, involves an additional cost in subjecting it to pressure that the article may recover the glossy and smooth surface it has lost. Now, I have found by experiment and trial that paper can be manufactured in a fit state for the printer with a beautifully smooth surface which would not be impaired by printing and drying ; and that printing upon such paper would be carried to much higher perfection as an art than can be attained by paper dried and re-wetted according to the present practice. The dampness of such paper would be scarcely perceptible to the touch, but would require (for such paper as the *Illustrated London News* is printed upon) a weight of steam or water amounting to no less than 13 lbs. per ream. If I were to use such paper in my business I should have to pay an excise tax upon water of no less than *1s.* 7½*d.* per ream, in addition to a tax of the same rate per pound on the paper itself. Now, I consume

26 tons of paper per week, or 1040 tons and upwards per annum, a fact which I state that you may see at a glance what an enormous sum I should have to pay as a penalty for using the improved paper which I could manufacture by the aid of a little water.'

This I read in order to show the effect of your regulations in preventing the best mode of manufacturing paper. Mr. Ingram then goes on to say that he could employ this invention in the manufacture of paper for educational books, but that he is prevented by this obnoxious paper duty from adopting that system. Mr. Ingram finishes his letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by saying—

'You must, sir, in your youth have wandered along the beautiful streams of Buckinghamshire, and listened to the busy sounds of the water-wheel tearing to pieces an otherwise useless article to manufacture it into valuable paper; and it must have given you pleasure to reflect that this gave healthful, pleasant, and remunerative employment to great numbers of the rural population. Most of the Buckinghamshire mills have, I grieve to remind you, been swept away under the operation of the excise duty, and transferred to barren but populous coal districts, leaving the population of Buckinghamshire unemployed and to a great extent pauperized. I have no hesitation in saying that, if this excise duty upon paper were abolished, these mills would be again prosperous, and would employ large numbers of people. Nor is this the only evil result of the tax in agricultural districts. Straw is no sooner employed in paper-making than it is taxed 300 per cent.'

So that you see with regard to the raw material of which paper is made; with regard to the labour of men, and women, and children, who are employed in the manufacture of paper —and I believe that when paper is made three-fifths of its value consists of the labour that has been employed upon it— considering also that the agricultural districts are precisely the localities best adapted by the purity of their streams of water for the manufacture of paper, I contend that I have some claim to submit this question to the consideration of gentlemen opposite, even as an agricultural question. And

in regard to Ireland, I can have no doubt whatever that the repeal of the excise duty on paper would have a most beneficent effect on the employment of labour in that country. The excise duty on paper causes a larger capital to be required to carry on a paper manufactory than would otherwise be necessary; and, therefore, in a country which has been so much pressed down by difficulties of various kinds as Ireland has been, and has so little capital to carry on various branches of industry, it is highly important that a manufacture so valuable, particularly in respect to the employment of labour, should no longer be oppressed by these excise duties, especially when you consider that the revenue derived from that excise duty in Ireland is very small, because the effect is not to give you a revenue, but to prohibit to a great extent the existence of the manufacture in that country.

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There can be no reason whatever why this country should not manufacture paper for the whole world. We might become exporters of paper as we are exporters of cotton goods, but by your foolish duty you actually induce Americans to come to this country, and buy up cotton waste, and the refuse of ropes, and a variety of other articles, for the express purpose of manufacturing them into paper, with which your own colonies are supplied. Why, this is a system that does not supply you with revenue. All it does is to prevent in this country the progressive increase of a valuable manufacture, to prevent the employment of labour, and to prevent the improvement, both moral and physical, of the great body of the working population.

I will now allude to that most important view of this question that peculiarly belongs to it, and does not apply to any other question of taxation, and that is the effect the paper duty has upon the literature of the country. Now, sir, I beg to ask a favour of gentlemen opposite, if any of them condescend to go into this question, and also of gentlemen on this side of the

Bad effect of paper duty on literature.

House, that they will not make use of an argument which has been as it were a stock argument used in opposition to the repeal of the paper duty. It is said that the duty on paper enters to so small an extent into the retail price of a book, that a purchaser of that book would never feel the effect of the repeal of the paper duty; and the right honourable gentleman, lately the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and another right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Control, who is no longer a member of this House, but is now a member of the other House, both made use of this argument, and alluded to M'Culloch's dictionary, saying it weighed four pounds and a half, and sold for 50*s*., and that the paper duty being three-halfpence a pound amounted to something like sixpence on this commercial dictionary, a reduction which the purchaser would not appreciate. Well, now I can only say in answer to that statement that it may be very just, but that it has no reference to the position I am taking up. My position is not in reference to the paper duty on works which sell at 50*s*., but on your cheap literature, which is sold at a low price, and to succeed must have an extensive circulation; that was the species of literature I was touching upon. But even as to the former argument, if the reduction of the price of books is of no value to the purchaser of books, what is the meaning of our repeal of the paper duty on bibles and prayer-books, but that you wish to increase the circulation of the sacred volume, and an acknowledgment that your excise duty on paper has to some extent at least an effect in preventing the circulation of these books? This view of the question is not at all met by the argument about M'Culloch's dictionary; and I ask as a personal favour that upon this occasion at least it will not be repeated, though I know it is the official argument that has always been used. What appears to me to be the real injurious effect of the paper duty on your cheap literature is, not that it raises the price, but that it deteriorates the quality; that the tax on paper stands in the way of improving the quality of that literature

which is circulated among your people, and that you have a deep interest in taking every step in your power to render such literature as moral and as improving as possible. You have your penny publications; but what stands in the way of rendering these publications as good as they might be? Why, your paper duty; and I will explain how that operates. Take the case of a penny publication, and I will quote Mr. Cassell, who is extensively engaged in the publication of excellent works calculated to improve the great body of your population. One of them is entitled, and justly, the *Popular Educator*. Why, this gentleman calculates that the money he pays to Government in the shape of duty on paper used in these publications is little short of £100 per week. If the duty were repealed the price would not be reduced. The price of a penny is low enough to insure a large circulation, but he could not put into his pocket the £100 per week. Competition would force him to lay it out in improving the publications, and he would employ better literary talent than he is able to employ at present. Why, it is a monstrous thing that a man who issues penny publications in this country, like the *Popular Educator* and the *Working Man's Friend*, should be called on to hand over to the public exchequer some £40 or £50 a week for each such publication, the fund out of which authorship should be paid. The man who only looks to cheapness, who does not care what he publishes, and who gives translations from French novels, and matter appealing to the passions, for the purpose of creating a large circulation, copies what he wants from existing works, and the duty that he pays to Government does not stand in the way of his issuing these penny publications, because he does not want a fund out of which to pay for authorship; but if you wish to meet that man in the market with better cheap publications, you must create a fund out of which the authorship can be paid, and a higher order of literature produced. I do not know that I have stated the case clearly to the House. It

The tax reduces the fund for authorship.

is clear to my own mind, but I will refer the House to some observations written by a gentleman who is well qualified to give an opinion on this subject, Mr. Charles Knight, who has published one or two excellent pamphlets on the subject, one called *The Struggles of a Book*, and the other *The Case of the Authors against the Paper Duty*. He is a man of weight on this question and of experience; and I am sure the House will admit he is a legitimate authority.

* * * * *

I think that if you are sincere in your wishes to advance education, you should show your sincerity by making this one of the first taxes to be repealed. It appears to me an inconsistent course to be teaching the people to read, if you do not at the same time do everything in your power to improve the quality of the books they are likely to peruse. The existing demand for penny publications, and the appetite for knowledge of some kind or another, is so strongly evidenced by the extent of the transactions in this branch of business, that you must not suppose that there will not be extensive circulation of some kind or another, no matter what may be the state of the law. That is no longer a matter of doubt, but a matter of certainty, and therefore every well-wisher of his country must desire that the quality of the literature which is so extensively circulated should be as good as it is possible to render it.

I have dealt with the advertisement, the paper, and the newspaper stamp duties together, because these three taxes originated at the same time, were put on together, were reduced together, and I should wish them to be taken off together. I admit that the duty derived from paper, amounting to about £800,000, although after all but a small sum when set against national education, is too large a sum when looked at financially to ask you at once to repeal. The Resolution of which I have given notice calls for the immediate repeal of the newspaper stamp and the advertisement duty; but, as I said before, I only ask you to record your opinion that the

paper duty ought not to be retained as a permanent mode of taxation. I have great suspicions, and I will give my reasons for those suspicions, that these latter, and the paper duty itself, under the specious disguise of raising money, as it was called, for the purposes of the war, were really only parts of a system established for the purpose of restraining literature and keeping down the press. I suspect as much, and I think I am in a condition to prove it, in the case of the advertisement and stamp duties; and I cannot help thinking, as they came into being at the same time, and by the same Act of Parliament, that similar motives actuated the Parliament of those days in regard to them. With regard to the advertisement duty, what is it? Only £160,000 a year. Is that a large sum to be frightened at? Let us remember what a large surplus revenue we have when we talk about repealing a duty which strikes more than anything else at the very revenue which was proposed to be augmented by its adoption.

A tax on advertisements! A tax providing that no man may say what he wishes, or tell what he wants, in the way of business transactions without being fined eighteen-pence every time he speaks through the only channel by means of which he can make himself generally heard. It is impossible to conceive, if I may be allowed to use so unparliamentary an expression, a more stupid tax than this advertisement duty. Why, if I wanted to find out a mode for lessening the public revenue, I should certainly invent one restricting the communication between commercial men, and so in lessening communications, lessen transactions, lessen trade, lessen consumption—in short, lessen the sources from which revenue arises. I venture to say that if you repeal this advertisement duty of £160,000 a year, you will never know it in next year's revenue. Then, if this be true, can anything be more cruel than to say that the poor servant girl who wants a place, if she makes her want known, must be fined eighteen-pence? Take again the cases of shipping, of mercantile transactions of every

The advertisement duty—its consequences.

kind, can anything be more obvious than that to impede the knowledge of what is going on is the surest possible way of restricting mercantile transactions? There is nothing a man has to sell which some other man does not want to purchase, if they could only be brought together. Do not add, then, to the unavoidable difficulties of trade, which are themselves large enough; do not stand in the way of the people making their mutual wants known to each other. Look at the United States, with their 10,000,000 of advertisements in their newspapers every year. How many have you in England with a similar, and, if possible, a more commercial population? Only 2,000,000; and you are thus defrauded of 8,000,000 of advertisements by the duty. And who are many of these advertisers who are shut out by this duty? The very poorest of the population. The rich advertiser who takes his column of the *Times* pays his eighteen-pence, and the poor servant maid, who wants a place is similarly taxed. Why, there is no justice in the distribution of the tax, setting aside the unfairness of the principle. Its inequality is so glaring, that, whether I advertise in a paper of large or small circulation, the duty is the same, although publicity is what I am supposed to be paying for. But I cannot believe that the money, £160,000 a year, is, or was, the object with the Legislature. Revenue never can be the reason why rational beings should persist in maintaining a tax which is so opposed to commercial progress and sound principles of legislation. There is something else; and that something is, to injure and keep down the newspaper press, and to cripple its independence. That is made evident by the tenor of your law. You practically say in your Act of Parliament that every time a man advertises in a newspaper he must pay eighteenpence, but if he advertises on a wall or in an omnibus, or employs one of those nuisances, the advertising vans, to which an honourable and gallant member some time since called the attention of the House, he may do so, and there is no duty imposed. But let him go to the newspaper, and he

Its object, to injure and weaken the press.

is mulcted in a pecuniary penalty at once. The advertisements form the legitimate fund for supporting a newspaper; and if you drive people away from its columns, you take the most direct means possible for injuring and lessening the independence of the newspaper press. Why, all these nuisance vans, placards, and advertising companies, are only so many proofs of the pressure of the advertisement duty on the means of publicity. I must here observe that a company has actually been formed for the purposes of this mode of advertising. But your advertisement duty does not affect them; it is only when you go to the unfortunate newspaper, the legitimate vehicle for this kind of knowledge which ought to have the benefit of these advertisements, that the penalty is enforced. I hold the prospectus of this company in my hand, and from this it appears that the company undertakes to advertise anything and everything, and will absorb the advertisements that would go to the newspapers, were it not for the tax.

What is an advertisement?

And, after all, what is an advertisement? I am certain this House does not know. The Board of Inland Revenue does not know; so strange is the tax that even official personages cannot understand or explain it. There is, for instance, the *Daily News*, a paper that undertook to give a list of sales about to take place, not in the form of an advertisement, nor charging anything for the insertion. They gave it merely with a view of making their paper attractive, and to supply the public with a useful piece of information. But the Board of Inland Revenue at once pounced down upon the proprietors, and said, 'You shall not insert this list, although you charge nothing for it, unless you pay eighteen-pence for each separate announcement.' Again, it appears that announcing ships to sail is an advertisement, while announcements of arrivals are free of duty. I mention this to show you that trade is not dealt uniformly with. And there are other ways in which the general newspaper is interfered with. Class publications may make as many announcements without duty as they please. There

is a sporting paper in which you have various kinds of announcements every week, which it appears to me are just as liable to duty as those upon which the duty is charged. In 'Matches to Come' there is a whole list of pedestrian matches; and another list of what is called 'The Canine Fancy,' in which there is a long list of dog fights. Again, in the 'Fancy' announcements as regards the 'Ring,' there is a regular announcement of all the fights to take place. For instance, there are 'Wedgebury and Green, announced to fight at Birmingham,' and fourteen or fifteen similar announcements. Now, what I have to say with regard to these announcements is, that they are much less valuable to the public than lists of ships to sail, or sales to take place, and that the latter are as much entitled to indulgence as the extracts I have read. Again, there are 'Horse-races' and 'Steeplechases,' very strong instances; and another announcement headed 'Ratting Sports Extraordinary.' I believe the policy is not to interfere with this description of advertisement, which is only interesting to certain classes, and circulating only among particular persons, while you do everything to hamper the announcements in the general and political newspaper press of the country. You allow many of these announcements about prize-fights and steeplechases and meetings at public-houses, involving great pecuniary advantages to the parties interested, to go free, while on matters of public benefit and importance you come down on the newspapers for the advertisement duty. Inform the public that on such a day a sermon would be preached for the relief of the survivors of the *Amazon* calamity, or merely announce the places where subscriptions would be received, and although the newspapers put in those announcements gratis, the Board of Inland Revenue comes down for its eighteen-pence. It was the same in the case of the Irish famine, and in all subscriptions for religious or charitable purposes a great proportion goes to the Government; and it is only when we turn to the sporting world, to steeplechases and 'ratting' feats, that the Board of Inland

Revenue exercises such extreme leniency. I hope, then, I may confidently appeal to the House for the repeal of this advertisement duty, which cripples the newspapers and prevents the diffusion of a vast mass of useful information, stands between the employer and the employed, and will, if persisted in, have a most pernicious effect on the competition in trade and commerce in which this country is engaged with the United States. I hope I shall have the support of the noble lord the member for London (Lord John Russell), who can have no objection on financial grounds, and who always expressed himself the friend of a free and independent press. Surely I may claim his support for my motion. As a matter of course I shall have the support of honourable gentlemen opposite, who brought forward a vote of censure on a distinguished member of the late Government for some transaction with a newspaper in Ireland. Why, the reason these newspapers are to be tampered with, and to take money for writing up this or that political view, is because you deprive them by taxation of the legitimate means of carrying on an honest and independent career. And let me tell you that throughout the whole newspaper press, although there may be some misgiving as to the newspaper stamp question, I never met one person who was not for the repeal of the advertisement duty; and it seems obvious that they should be so, because in proportion as you reduce the tax you must increase the number of advertisements. In the case of the *Times*, it would be impossible for it to have more advertisements than at present, for it would then become a huge book of advertisements. But there would be an overflow, and then every other newspaper would have a fair chance of getting a share. The *Times* would retain all it has, and possibly be improved in a commercial point of view, while the poor labourer or servant who advertised would be materially benefited. You must recollect that the advertising van is only a more costly mode of advertising than the newspaper, and that it is not suited to the servant or labourer and other humble persons, who require the cheapest possible mode of

announcing that their services or other commodities are to be disposed of.

Having said thus much with regard to the advertisement duty, which more properly belongs to my honourable friend the member for Dumfries (Mr. Ewart), who has devoted much attention to the subject, and has made great and meritorious efforts, I will now pass on to the question of the newspaper stamp. I said I could show that this was not a revenue question at all, and that it had never been proposed by the Legislature, or continued by the Legislature, speaking through the preamble of their Act of Parliament, as a revenue question. For how do we find that the Newspaper Stamp Act originated? On the 17th of January, 1711, there was a message from the Crown, and to that message there was a reply, which I have extracted from the journals of the House :—

The newspaper stamp duty—its origin.

'Mr. Secretary St. John informed the House he had a message. Her Majesty finds it necessary to observe how great license is taken in publishing false and scandalous libels, such as are a reproach to any Government. This evil seems to be grown too strong for the laws now in force ; it is, therefore, recommended to you to find a remedy equal to the mischief.'

The answer of the House was as follows :—

'We are very sensible how much the liberty of the press is abused by turning it into such licentiousness as is a reproach to the nation, since not only false and scandalous libels are printed and published against your Majesty's Government, but the most horrid blasphemies against God and religion ; and we beg leave humbly to assure your Majesty that we will do our utmost to find out a remedy equal to the mischief, and that may effectually cure it.'

In fulfilment of their pledge, I find the House proceeded to pass the following resolution :—

'Some members were so exasperated at the Dutch memorial being published in a newspaper, that on the 12th, the House being resolved into a Grand Committee to consider of that part of the

Queen's message to the House, the 17th of January last, which relates to the great license taken in publishing false and scandalous libels, Sir Gilbert Dolben being the chairman, they came to these two resolutions: "1. That the liberty taken in printing and publishing scandalous and impious libels creates divisions among her Majesty's subjects, tends to the disturbance of the public peace, is highly prejudicial to her Majesty's Government, and is occasioned for want of due regulating the press. 2. That all printing presses be registered, with the names of the owners and places of abode; and that the author, printer, and publisher of every book set his name and place of abode thereto."'

These resolutions were ordered for discussion on the Tuesday following, but it was put off, and further adjourned from time to time, because some member of the Grand Committee of Ways and Means had in the interim suggested a more effectual way of putting down libel—namely, that of putting a duty on newspapers and pamphlets. To show that the object was not mistaken by the public writers of the day, I will read an extract from Dean Swift, in which he says—

'Among the matters of importance during this Session, we may justly number the proceedings of the House of Commons with relation to the press, since her Majesty's message to the House of January 17th, concludes with a paragraph representing the great licenses taken in publishing false and scandalous libels, such as are a reproach to any government, and recommending them to find a remedy equal to the mischief. The meaning of these words in the message seems to be confined to those weekly and daily papers and pamphlets reflecting upon the persons, and the management of the Ministry. But the House of Commons in their address which answers this message, make an addition of the blasphemies against God and religion; and it is certain that nothing would be more for the honour of the Legislature than some effectual law for putting a stop to this universal mischief; but as the person who advised the queen on that part of her message had only these in his thoughts, the redressing of the political and factious libels, I think he ought to have taken care by his great credit in the House to have proposed some way by which that evil might be removed; the law for taxing single

papers having produced a quite contrary effect, as was then foreseen by many persons, and has since been found true by experience. Those who would draw their pens by the side of their princes and country are discouraged by this tax, which exceeds the intrinsic value both of the materials and the work; and this, if I be not mistaken, without example.'

Now, all that Dean Swift foresaw has since come to pass. I therefore say, that experience up to the present time shows that taxes on newspapers and pamphlets is not the best mode of suppressing irreligious publications or libels upon government, because such publications can be managed in a way in which you cannot reach them. They are sure to come out in times of excitement unstamped, and those who would support the cause of order and religion are disqualified by the tax from establishing wholesome publications to defend the truth. But the same feeling actuated the Legislature up to a recent period. When they extended in the reign of George III. the stamp to various publications to which it did not before apply, they said nothing about revenue, nothing of the kind. The preamble of that Act ran thus:—

'Whereas pamphlets and printed papers containing observations upon public events and occurrences, tending to excite hatred and contempt of the Government, and constitution of these realms as by law established, and also vilifying our holy religion, have lately been published in great numbers and at very small prices, and it is expedient that the same should be restrained, may it therefore please your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the king's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after ten days after the passing of this Act, all pamphlets and papers containing any public news, intelligence, or occurrences, or any remarks or observations thereon, or upon any matter in Church or State, printed in any part of the United Kingdom for sale, and published periodically, or in parts or numbers, at intervals not exceeding twenty-six days between the publication of any two such pamphlets or papers, parts or numbers,' etc.

It is clear, therefore, that revenue was not the object. An idea, however, has sprung up, that though the stamp duty was not imposed for revenue purposes, the postal advantages which have been connected with it were such that the duty had better remain as it is, since it enabled newspapers and other printed papers to be transmitted through the post free from other charge. But with this question of the postal transmission of newspapers, the tax on news has really nothing to do. You may make what regulations you please for the transmission of printed papers by post, but the question is whether a man may be allowed to publish news without a stamp. It must be observed that there are upwards of fifty-four papers which are allowed this privilege of only stamping the stamp on the particular papers which are transmitted by post; but by your plan you make those pay who do not send by post, in order that those who do may have postal accommodation. Now, it appears that there are 80,000,000 of stamps issued annually, and that there are 66,000,000 of postal transmissions. But of these, as was proved before a committee of that House, one half are re-transmissions; so that, in fact, the number of papers benefited by the accommodation is reduced to 33,000,000, and 80,000,000 of papers are taxed for the accommodation of 33,000,000 of papers. Besides, how easy would it be to provide a stamped wrapper for printed papers, up to a certain weight, charging on it a penny, or a halfpenny, if you please. I am not here to suggest postal regulations; but of this I am sure, from what Mr. Rowland Hill said, that the post-office authorities are anxious to retain the carriage of printed matter, and that, rather than lose it, they would carry them for the lowest possible charge. It might be less than a penny, for they would have to compete with private carriage; and Mr. Rowland Hill said that if all the newspapers were taken from the post-office, they would not be able to reduce to any appreciable extent the expenses of the establishment. It is therefore clear that all that would be got for carrying newspapers would be

so much added to the revenue of the post-office. Besides, if the stamp was taken off, the man who now waits two or three days for stale news, by taking in a second-hand newspaper, could then have a fresh newspaper at the same cost each day, and get the news at the earliest moment. It is clear that the object would be obtained by a cheap system of postal transmission. I am not one of those who think that newspapers ought to be carried free, but I object to making a law that every man shall stamp his paper if it contain news, because there happen to be some people who wish to have the privilege of sending these papers by post. I say take off the stamp generally, and when you send by post let there be a stamped wrapper. I will not say more upon the postal question, which is beside the question before the House; and, besides, it will be perfectly easy to deal with it without injuring any person whatever.

I now revert to the point which was suggested in the time of Swift, that these stamps would secure you from libellous publications. They do not, even if you were able to enforce the law, which you are totally unable to do, and perhaps would be afraid to do. The wording of the Act does not touch essays or political speculations. Among these publications there is one entitled the *English Republic, or God and the People*, attacking monarchical institutions, and, in the words of the Act, bringing the laws and institutions of the country into contempt. But this also deals with religious questions, attacks the truths of Christianity, and enters into political and theological questions—in fact, all those things which you wish to prevent. Then there is another paper. It is called *Notes for the People*, and is written by Mr. Ernest Jones. I will not say that it is of an objectionable character, because I give no opinion on these publications; but I will read a paragraph from it, in order to show the doctrines which are published for the working classes in the form of speculative theories, while you are passing a law which has the effect of preventing their

Attacks on government and religion.

having any record of public news, or allowing papers of that kind to compete with publications such as these. It is a passage from this work of Mr. Ernest Jones, addressed to the people of the Bristol Cotton Works.[1]

Such is the tone of the publications, and such are the theories which you are willing to allow. This is an unstamped publication, but it is precisely of the nature of those which the present law was intended to put a stop to. In quoting these publications, I am showing the extreme folly of preventing the people from having a choice between buying such a publication as this, and buying news of a useful character such as a cheap newspaper would record, which comprises the course of current events, the proceedings of our Courts of Justice, the proceedings of Parliament, and the occurrences of daily life in which every man takes a lively interest; and there is no one who would not prefer news to any mere speculative theories or any collection of essays. But independently of this, it is a monstrous injustice to deprive the working classes from having news in their penny publications. If you make war against news contained in penny publications, we of the upper and middle classes alone have all the news; and why are the upper classes to monopolize it all? Is not the labourer interested in obtaining a knowledge of all that is going on relating to trade, to the progress of emigration, and the advancement of industry? Look at the established newspaper press. What a pernicious effect these duties appear to have had on the established newspaper press! It can be shown that there are only two morning papers in London that have an increasing circulation; all the rest are declining, and becoming year by year 'small by degrees and beautifully less.'

The suppression of cheap news.

[1] Milner Gibson then read the passage in question, which was in effect an invitation to the people to break down the monopoly possessed by the proprietors of the Cotton Works, and to endeavour to possess works of their own, and urging them to endeavour to obtain for the working classes £10,000,000 out of the interest of the national debt, and £10,000,000 out of the £16,000,000 spent on the naval and military expenditure of the country.

It appears to me that, unless you allow them the opportunity of reducing their prices, so that new fields of operation may be open to them, we shall soon have only two London morning papers left, the *Times* and *Morning Advertiser*. The *Times* has risen from a comparatively small circulation to one of 12,000,000 annually, while the rest of the press is declining. The House is in possession of all the tables which were laid before them last year, containing a return of the number of all the stamps issued; and it will be found with regard to the other papers that the *Morning Chronicle* has a yearly circulation under 1,000,000, the *Morning Herald* of perhaps something more than 1,000,000, and the *Daily News* perhaps of something like 2,000,000. *The Daily News*, soon after it commenced, reduced its price to 2½*d*., when its publication immediately rose to between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000. The price was again raised, however, owing to the pressure of the taxation, and its circulation at once fell back to its old point, nor is it now, as far as can be judged, improving. In fact, the only two papers whose circulation is maintained are the *Morning Advertiser* and the *Times*. The former had a peculiar class of support, and the latter is eating up all the rest of the London daily newspapers, so that in a few years they will probably be the only newspapers which the people will have to read. That is not a satisfactory state of things. I take these facts from a work written by Mr. Henry Hunt, called the *History of the Newspaper Press*, who there comments on the fact that during the last fifty years—with the exception of the *Daily News* and the *Morning Advertiser*—all attempts to set up new morning papers have failed; thus showing that there is no room for any new London paper; and that the tendency of your taxing newspapers three times over is to create a kind of monopoly in them, and to limit the diffusion of news to a few hands. I do not charge any existing paper with advocating the maintenance of the stamp duty, on account of their own vested interests. It was stated, on behalf of the *Times*, before the committee of last session, that the

Tendency to press monopoly.

removal of the stamp duty would be attended with commercial advantages to that paper, and that the stamp on the supplement has a tendency to limit its circulation; and the words of Mr. Mowbray Morris, the manager of the *Times*, who was examined before the committee, as I recollect them were, "that if, as manager of the *Times*, he had only to consider the supplying the public with as many papers as they would buy, he could double the circulation in two years." The effect of the stamp duty on the supplement of the *Times* was to render it necessary for the managers to prevent the circulation from going beyond a certain amount; for when the advertisement fund, for the advertisements in the supplement, is exhausted, then, as far as the supplement is concerned, profit ends, and loss commences, so that the circulation must be stopped. Thus the effect of the stamp law is, first to lessen the circulation of the leading paper to half what it might be; and also to affect all the other papers by causing a declining circulation; and, what is worse than all, to prevent the working classes from having any newspaper at all. You limit the supply of newspapers to the wealthy and middle classes, and deny it altogether to the working classes. I ask you, therefore, to repeal this tax upon principle.

What is a newspaper? The case of Charles Dickens.

Can you enforce your law after all, and can you say what is news on which you profess to be able to impose a tax? What is the law upon this subject, and can your law officers explain it? What is the position in which you are now placed? You engaged in a suit at law with Mr. Charles Dickens, or rather his publishers, who published an excellent and interesting compilation called *Household Narrative of Current Events*, which is issued every month, and gives the news up to the end of the month. The Board of Inland Revenue, having put down other monthly publications of a similar character in different parts of the country, tried to put Mr. Charles Dickens's publication down also. He tried the question in a court of law, and the judges decided three to one in his

favour. So that, after all the expense which was incurred in getting up the case and bringing it to trial, it was decided that the *Household Narrative of Current Events* was not a newspaper, and that Mr. Dickens had a right to publish news in a publication without a stamp, provided that it was not issued oftener than once a month. The judges did not decide in accordance with the practice of the Board of Inland Revenue, as pursued in many cases, but on a new view of the question—namely, that of the infrequency of the publication, and that news which is published only once a month is to escape the duty. Mr. Dickens has obtained a verdict in his favour; but the Government say they are not satisfied with that verdict, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or rather the Attorney-General, says that he proposes to disturb that decision, and that he will have another lawsuit, in order to see whether this paper is liable to the stamp duty or not. I say this is a great grievance. You happen, in this instance, to have fallen in with a man of spirit, who is able and willing to fight the question in a court of law; but how many persons are there who have neither the means nor the courage to contest a suit at law with the Board of Inland Revenue? If you tax so vague and so indefinite a thing as news, to all time the law will be one mass of uncertainty, and many persons will be subject to great injustice. You will be in the same position as you were under the Stamp Law in 1836, when, after some hundred persons who were connected with the publication and sale of the *Poor Man's Guardian* had been imprisoned, the Courts of Law decided that it was not a newspaper, and did not require a stamp; and therefore the whole of the proceedings against these persons was a gross injustice and a very great oppression. You will be in the same position if you carry out the law, as you are trying to do, in the case of the *Household Narrative of Current Events*, and you will end the matter in the same way as when the Board of Inland Revenue prosecuted these papers and seized the printing presses. I do not mean to say that

there is any desire on the part of the Board of Inland Revenue to oppress the publishers of the *Household Narrative of Current Events;* for I believe there was a desire to administer the law leniently; but it is inherent in the system of taxing so indefinable a thing as news, that they should appear to act severely, and should be defeated in the end; and you will find that you will be defeated in the end. Those consequences will be the natural result. If you think it right to attempt to maintain the respectability of the press, to maintain your institutions, and the interests of religion, by taxing newspapers, is it fit that you should leave the discretion of prosecuting them or not to the Board of Inland Revenue? Are excisemen the sort of persons to be entrusted with the maintenance of religion and of your institutions? If it is to devolve on them, as has been clearly proved before the committee, to decide what publications are to be proceeded against, and in what cases the law may be dispensed with, you set them up in a certain degree as the censors of the press; and it is possible that in bad times they may be made subservient to the wishes of the ministers of the day, or of any party that may wish particular papers to be oppressed. It appears to me to be a most dangerous doctrine to lay down, that the law is not to be enforced in all cases, but is to be held *in terrorem* over these publications, and they are to be told that they may go on within a certain limit, but if they break beyond that point which the Board of Inland Revenue may think to be dangerous to our institutions, then the penalties on unstamped publications will be enforced. It appears to me that such a result will follow from the law as it now stands on the Statute-book. Can any one believe that the Government of 1852 will venture on a crusade against the unstamped press, like that of 1836? I believe they would shrink from such an undertaking. But it is their duty to undertake it. If you are afraid to enforce the law, repeal it. If you cannot enforce it equally, do not maintain it at all; for if you do, you cause great injustice. There is nothing to prevent the Board of Inland Revenue

from proceeding against these publications; but if they do, they will endanger the little that remains in their power, and the very existence of the stamp itself. I have stated that many of these unstamped publications contain news, but I will not confine myself to assertions, but I will bring forward proofs, and then leave the House to judge whether that is not the case. There are several sporting papers which are unstamped. Take the *Racing Times;* does it not contain all relating to the various races and the latest betting? and is not that news? There is the *Racing Telegraph*, which is as much a newspaper with regard to races as anything can be. Here is a recent number, which takes a glance at the late meeting at the Northampton and Pytchley Hunt Races, and gives a list of the stewards and the whole account of the races. Then, with regard to the Epsom Spring Meeting, it tells us that 'Lord Derby was successful in pocketing the Whittlebury stakes by means of his Longbow, and that Mr. Meiklam came in second.' This is regular news; but the Board of Inland Revenue has chosen to draw a distinction between this class of intelligence and general news. So long as a publication confines itself to one subject, it need not be stamped. It appeared the principle is that if you divide one newspaper into half a dozen, each confined to one subject, they might be untaxed; but, if you collate them into one, the newspaper must pay. All this is, I believe, a pure invention of the Board of Inland Revenue; for a horse-race is undoubtedly a public occurrence. If the 'Derby' is not, what is, when this House has, for some time past, regularly adjourned upon that day? There are many sporting papers of the same kind. The *Racing Times*, as well as the *Racing Telegraph*, gives a similar account of the Northampton meeting. This is actual news, and the paper is a record of facts; and there are many other papers of the same kind, such as the *Legal Observer*, which chronicles all suits at law, and all the proceedings of our courts of justice; and the same may be said of the *Builder*, and others, which,

Sporting and betting news.

if the law was enforced, would come under the operation of the Stamp Act. Then, again, with regard to comments on news, your legislation was intended to affect not only the chronicling of current events, but the observations made on them. I ask if this is not an example which I take from a publication of Mr. Richard Oastler, entitled *The Home?* He gives Mr. Ferrand's letters to the Duke of Newcastle, and then he comments on several public proceedings, and on debates in this House, and addresses a letter to my honourable friend and colleague [Mr. Bright], in which he says—

'I should have left you to have taken your chance in your own "tumult," had you not ventured, in the House of Commons, to utter the most extravagant, impertinent nonsense that ever escaped from the lips of mortal. At a time when all our military and naval authorities, supported by the voice of the public, demand that this nation shall be put in a better state of defence against foreign invasion, and when both the last and the present Government had determined that that most constitutional force, the militia, shall once more be organized, and that the men shall be trained a few weeks every year, to enable us to resist any invading force, you are ready to oppose that necessary and constitutional proposition. Not from any love of peace—that is impossible; for, but a few days before, you had proved that you were animated, from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head, with the martial spirit, the spirit of war, and were prepared to take the field, to engage in civil war, in defence of what you call free trade, which, no man knows better than yourself, means the ascendancy of the cotton lords, low wages, and long hours of factory toil.'

I say, such a document, coming immediately after a speech delivered in this House, observing on public occurrences, and the publication which contains it, is liable to a stamp; but you cannot enforce the law, and if you did, you would have to deal with a legion of the same kind, and you would be involved in all the troubles of 1836. This is a cogent reason why I should vote for the repeal of this law. Again, take the *Legal Observer*. I found in it an article relating to the question of the attorney's certificate, which states 'that

many burdens of like character had been removed, while the attorney's annual certificate was excepted,' and concludes—

'We observe that several petitions for the repeal of this tax have been presented from individual members of the profession, and a few from particular towns; and we presume there can be no objection to these occasional notes of preparation for the renewed contest; but we understand the preferable course will be to procure the attendance of members on the day fixed for the debate, in order that they may present the petitions to the House just before the motion of Lord Robert Grosvenor.'

This is merely observation upon news, and I might quote hundreds of the same kind from other papers, but there is one so marked, that I must state it. It is taken from the *Lamp*, an unstamped paper of 6th March, 1852, and it is contained in its first leading article, in which it is said—

'Be it known unto all whom it may concern, that the Russell and Durham Ministry has paid the debt of nature. Long before these lines meet the eye of our readers, all the world will have learned the fact, and all the world—save the paltry, place-loving family clique—will rejoice at it. What a singular turn out! And by what singular instrumentality! "Old Pam" has had his revenge, and no doubt he chuckles o'er the downfall of him who so lately and so unceremoniously requested him to vacate his chair in the Foreign Office.'

Now, I call this commenting on public events. Why does not the Attorney-General enforce the law? or, if he is afraid to do that, why not repeal it? This publication also contains many comments on the late Government, as well as on the present, and has also a leading article upon the coming elections, and states what the duty of the electors is in the following words:—

'But, after all, what is our present duty? Why, to take every means in our power to thwart the "Tories"; to put them out of office as soon as possible. Give them not an hour's security. What, then! let the Whigs reassume power. Not so. The

Whigs, as they are, can never again take office. There must be no family compact. There shall be none; or, if there be, the "Brigade" will drum them out of their quarters.'

If this is to be the mode in which you enforce the stamp duty on such papers, then I say that I have established a clear case why the House should consent to the resolution I propose. The Postal question I have disposed of. The newspaper proprietary we are not entitled to consider as a body who have vested interests in the maintenance of these taxes, or who are entitled to urge that they should be maintained to prevent a new rivalry with their interest. Nor do I believe there would be many of them who would take that course, but if there were, we, as a Parliament, are bound to deal with them on the broad ground of justice to the community. Having so long detained the House, I will not trouble them with any lengthened peroration, but simply move the first resolution.

PART III

WARS AND ARMAMENTS

WARS AND ARMAMENTS

THIS part of the work has involved considerable difficulties. Cobden and Bright never concealed their opinion that war is very seldom either just or necessary. They regarded freedom of trade and freedom of government as powerful allies of peace. They were among the earliest and most effective champions of arbitration. They strenuously opposed the growth of military and naval expenditure, not only because overgrown establishments are incentives to needless wars, but also because they actually weaken the resources of the nation, just as over-insurance may easily cripple and ruin an individual trader. It is worthy of note that the views expressed with so much courage and moderation by Cobden and Bright upon the two great wars of their time have since been endorsed by public opinion, and by the judgment even of those statesmen who opposed them. With the Cobdenic policy of armaments, Mr. Gladstone, a true disciple of Sir Robert Peel, was always in active sympathy; but there were moments which demanded still larger outlook and a still sounder moral judgment when that great Liberal minister went sadly astray. Cobden understood better than Bright the sympathy which Gladstone and others felt for the States of the South; and indeed, for a moment at the outset, Cobden was himself a little doubtful about the merits of the struggle. The action of the Manchester School, and the strong moral support which it won for the North among the working-classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire, probably saved this country from a great war, which could hardly have ended otherwise than with the incorporation of Canada in the United States. Their foresight in 1853–4 was equally conspicuous, and a far larger measure of courage was required. Upon this point no better or more eloquent witness can be called than Mr. Gladstone. 'I have not,' said he, in paying a last tribute to Bright, 'through my whole political life, fully embraced what I take to be the character of Mr. Bright, and the value of that character to the country. I mention this because it was at a peculiar epoch—the epoch of the Crimean War—that I came more fully to understand

than I had done before, the position which was held by him and by his eminent, and I must go a step further and say, his illustrious friend, Mr. Cobden, in the country. These men had lived upon the confidence, the approval, and the applause of the people. The work of their lives had been to propel the tide of public sentiment. Suddenly there came a great occasion on which they differed from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen. I myself was one of those who did not agree with them in the particular view which they took of the Crimean conflict. But I felt profoundly what must have been the moral elevation of the men who, having been nurtured through their lives in the atmosphere of popular approval and enthusiasm, could at a moment's notice consent to part with the whole of that favour which they had hitherto enjoyed, and which their opponents thought to be the very breath of their nostrils. They accepted, undoubtedly, the unpopularity of opposing that war, which, although many may have since changed their opinion with regard to it, commanded, if not the unanimous, yet the enormously prevailing approval and concurrence of the country. At that time it was—although we had known much of Mr. Bright before—that we learnt something more. We had known the great mental gifts which distinguished him ; we had known his courage and his consistency ; we had known his splendid eloquence, which then was or afterwards came to be acknowledged as the loftiest that has sounded within these walls during his generation. But we had not till then known how high the moral tone of those popular leaders had been pitched, what bright examples they set to the whole of their contemporaries and to coming generations, and with what readiness they could part with popular sympathy and support for the sake of the right and of their conscientious convictions.'

In evidence given quite recently before a parliamentary committee on expenditure, Lord Welby has thrown a new light upon Cobden's financial genius. It was known that he had a firm grasp of economic principles, a wide knowledge (based upon reason, experience, and travel), of economic facts, that his figures were never at fault, that he had unequalled gift for lucid exposition and apt illustration ; but it was not known, I think, that Mr. Gladstone, when about to create the post of Comptroller and Auditor-General, offered the position to Cobden, as the man who, though he had not had a single month of official life, was best fitted to undertake the supreme official control and supervision of all the spending departments of Government.

I.—ARMAMENTS, RETRENCHMENT, AND FINANCIAL REFORM

The following is from a speech delivered by Cobden in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on January 10th, 1849, in support of the following resolution: 'That this meeting resolves to co-operate with the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, and other bodies, in their efforts to reduce the public expenditure to at least the standard of 1835, and to secure a more equitable and economical system of taxation.' Those who are willing to study it carefully will learn many political secrets. A summary of the speech was conveyed to the *Times* the same night 'by electric telegraph,' and a verbatim report appeared on January 12th. It was described by the *Times* in an unusually friendly article as 'one of his best speeches,' which 'everybody will read with pleasure and with the conviction that he is learning a good deal of truth in a very lucid form.'

We have often, gentlemen, met in this hall to advocate a cause which has brought upon us the charge of being the farmers' enemies; and now we come forward in another character—we appear here as the farmers' friends. We have been accused of having subjected the agriculturists of this country to a competition with foreigners. They have complained to us that they are more heavily taxed than the foreign farmers. Now, gentlemen, we come forward to offer them the right hand of fellowship and union, to effect a reduction of ten millions in the cost of our Government. I have moved, and in your name I hope it will go forth to the country, that we co-operate with the financial reformers of Liverpool in their agitation for financial reform, on the condition that we advocate a return to the expenditure of 1835. In 1835, the affairs of this Government were carried on for ten millions less of money than they are this year, and I have

ventured to propose, in a letter [1] which may have probably met the eyes of some of those present, that we should go back to that expenditure. I have waited three weeks before I should have the opportunity of saying a word in public in defence of my views, to see what would be said against that recommendation. I must confess that my opponents have not given me much to answer. I have heard it said, and it is probably the most valid argument that can be urged, that the population has increased since 1835. True, it has; our numbers are 12½ per cent. more than they were then, and our opponents say that we must allow a larger sum for the government of a great number than a smaller; and I admit the argument so far as civil government goes, and in my plan I allow forty per cent. more for the civil government than was expended in 1835. But I deny that thirteen years of duration of peace is an additional argument why we should have an increase of our forces.

Back to 1835.

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It appears that in 1835 we spent £11,600,000 for our army, navy, and ordnance, and I propose that we now shall not expend more than £10,000,000. What I take from the expenditure for warlike purposes in 1835, I add to the civil expenditure in 1848. We spent for purposes of civil government in 1835, £4,300,000; I allow £5,900,000 for the civil expenditure of the Government now; and taking into account the saving which I contemplate in the cost of collecting the revenue, and in the management of the Crown lands, which I have seen estimated by a financial reformer at something like half a million—taking these into account, I am allowing more than actually we are now expending for the ordinary expenses of the civil government of this country, and thus we get rid altogether of the objection, that increase of population requires an increase of expenditure to govern the people. Then, there has been another argument used also, and it is this: that, during the last year, and the year before, there was a deficiency

[1] See later, p. 386.

of revenue. We have spent more than we have received, and we borrow money; and, therefore, even if my financial plan should be carried out, there still will not be the ten millions to dispose of in the remission of taxes. Well, my answer to that is this—and these cunning financiers who meet me with this argument ought to know it—that if the revenue has fallen off during the last year and the year before, it has been because the balance-sheets of our merchants and manufacturers have been equally adverse. The revenue has been deficient because the profits have been annihilated in the trade of every man in the country; but now that you have food at moderate prices, trade revives, and instantly you see the revenue increasing, and next year, perhaps this year—the next year, certainly—will see you with a surplus revenue as certainly as you had a deficiency last year. But I say, gentlemen—and I want to keep the financial reformers to this point, because we must have one simple article of faith, or we cannot march together—I say, give me the expenditure back again of 1835, and I will guarantee you the remission of ten millions of taxation. If you want—if the country wants to reduce their duty on tea one-half; if you wish to abolish altogether the duty upon timber, upon butter, upon cheese, upon soap, upon paper, upon malt, upon house-windows; if you wish to put an end to a system that curtails those necessaries and comforts—then raise your voices throughout the country, simultaneously, for the expenditure of 1835.

Now, where is the difficulty? Where is the difficulty of returning to the expenditure of 1835? Why, the whole question lies in the amount of your warlike armaments. The whole question is, Will the Government be content to waste ten millions of money in unproductive services like your fighting establishments—I mean your fighting establishments in a time of peace? Will our Government be content with ten millions? and if not, why not? I want the arguments—why not? I was asked the other day by an M.P., 'When are you going into the details to show how you propose to carry on

the Government upon your plan?' My answer was this: 'I should be a very bad tactician, and but a poor logician, if, when I have made a proposal that the Government should support its warlike establishments with ten millions of money, I did not call upon them to give me an answer, and to show me why they cannot maintain them with ten millions.' I put them on the defensive. I ask them whether they have made the most of the money they receive. How do you think they dispose of the money? Why, you maintain one hundred and fifty admirals, besides fifty retired admirals. Well, but how many do you think you employ? Why, during the heat of the great French war—the greatest war on record—when you had nearly one thousand pennants flying, you never employed more than thirty-six admirals at one time—and at this time you have but fourteen admirals in active service. With all their ingenuity of putting admirals to work when they are not wanted, they can only find employment for fourteen. Well, then, I find in the army you have a colonel for every regiment who does the work; and you have another colonel of every regiment, who is the tailor to the regiment—who never goes near it—who never sees it—whom the men would not know if he did go near it; but he supplies clothes to them, and gets the profits of a tailor. These are illustrations how money is wasted. But I won't confine myself to the abuses and waste that occur. I tell you plainly from the outset, that, in order to effect such a reduction of expenditure for your armaments as you require for a relief to the country, a material relief—that will be felt in the homes and at the firesides of the population of this country—you must reduce the number of men. You must be content with a smaller manifestation of brute force in the eyes of the world. You must trust something to Providence—something to your own just intentions—and your good conduct to other nations; and you must rely less upon that costly, that wasteful expenditure, arising from so enormous a display of brute force.

Idle admirals and colonels.

Now, gentlemen, I will bring this matter home to my

opponents with a very few figures. How is it we have had this great increase in the cost of our armaments? Has it been only an increase of waste, an increase in the number of admirals, and an increase in the number of colonels? No; it is because you have augmented the number of your men. I hold in my hand a statement made by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons last session. I will quote his own figures. He gives me the increase of the army, navy, and ordnance, since 1835; and in 1835 the number of men in all these services was 135,743; in last year they were 196,063. The increase in the number of men in the army, navy, and ordnance, since 1835, has been 60,320. Now, what has been the increase of the expenditure? In 1835, the total cost of all these services was £11,600,000. In the present year it is upwards of £18,000,000. The increase of the men has been as nearly as possible fifty per cent., and the increase in the money has been about fifty per cent. also. It is perfectly understood when Parliament votes the men, it must vote corresponding establishments in every direction; and, therefore, while I admit there are abuses, and great waste and mismanagement, I say, if you want a material reduction in the cost of your armaments, you must at once boldly proceed on the plan of reducing the number of armed men.

Increase of soldiers and sailors.

Why should you not reduce them? Why have they been increased? There has always been a ready excuse for adding to the force when an augmentation of the army, navy, or ordnance has been proposed; but what I complain of is, that when the alleged occasion of the increase has passed away, we never have a diminution. In 1835, as I have told you, our armaments were at the lowest point. In 1836, a cry was got up that the Russians were coming to invade us. I remember penning a pamphlet, to expose the absurdity of the cry, that the Russians were preparing to invade the coast of Norfolk some foggy morning; but that cry was an excuse for an increase in our navy. Then, again, in

Influence of parties.

1839, after the unfortunate scenes at Monmouth, in which Frost, Williams, and Jones were concerned—I suppose I must call it rebellion—there was immediately a proposal made by Lord John Russell for an increase of 5000 men to the army. That increase was made specifically to meet the case of the Chartist riots; but when tranquillity returned, we never heard a word about reducing those 5000 men. If you follow step by step the increase in our armaments, you will find the same course pursued. At one time, we must needs go and settle affairs in Syria, and we sent a large fleet to bombard Acre, and fight Ibrahim Pasha, or some other Pasha. Then we had a quarrel with the French at Tahiti. Then in 1845, there was a dispute about the Oregon boundary. As President Polk talked a great deal about fighting, and some men in the House of Representatives uttered more nonsense than usual, our Government proposed a large increase in the navy, and we had the 'squadron of evolution' fitted out—this squadron of evolution is still going on with its evolutions. This was as a demonstration against America; but the Oregon question was settled—the Tahiti question is settled—the Chartists, I hope, are now well employed and comfortable; where, then, is the pretence for keeping up all these increased armaments?

But I have not forgotten the last excuse. You remember, this time last year, standing on this platform, I raised my voice in conjunction with yours—and we stood almost alone—against that wicked attempt to impose on us by increasing our national defences to protect us against an invasion from France. By way of parenthesis, for your encouragement and the encouragement of the country, let me just remind you of the progress of opinion since then. We then had to contend against the increase of our overgrown establishments—we had an up-hill battle, but we succeeded. Now, here is a proposal before the country to reduce the cost of our armaments nearly one-half, and that proposal is receiving more favour with the public within twelve months than our resistance to an increase of the armaments did last year.

The French bogey.

And why is it? Because, in spite of all the efforts to mystify the public mind on the subject, events on the Continent have trumpet-tongued declared, that the attempt to frighten us with the threat of an unprovoked attack from France, was a vile slander upon that nation. We were told this time last year, 'It is true the French are quiet now, because Louis Philippe, the Napoleon of Peace, is on the throne; but wait till he dies, and you will see how the French people, that are now kept in by this wise monarch, will break loose on their neighbours.' Louis Philippe is politically dead; the French people were thrown entirely on their own resources—the bridle on their necks, the bit in their mouths, the masses were all-powerful, and the Government, on its knees, was ready to follow them to the utmost bent of their passions. Has there been amidst that 35,000,000 of people, your next neighbours, one whisper that could justify the accusations made against them last year by those wicked alarmists and panic-mongers whom I will never forgive, or, if I do, I will never forget to remind them of their wickedness? Has there been one act of the French people to warrant the imputation that they wished to come and attack you? But I won't confine myself to that. There were countries nearer home which everybody supposed the French more likely to attack than to attempt to conquer England. Has there been the slightest wish displayed on the part of the French people to make the Rhine the boundary of their empire? Have they invaded Belgium? Have they entered Holland? Have they conquered Italy? Have they shown the slighest disposition for conquest in any way? On the contrary, wherever a public man has sought to conciliate the French people, has he not addressed them in terms of peace, and promised them, above all things, that he will follow a pacific policy? Take their President—a Napoleon Buonaparte—I say nothing of his fitness to be President of the Republic, that is the affair of the French people, not ours; but observe, when such an individual canvasses the French people for their suffrages, how he accosts them. Does he

promise them a war against England, or at least an invasion of Belgium? What said Louis Napoleon in his address to the French people?—

'With war, there can be no mitigation of our sufferings. Peace shall, therefore, be the most cherished object of my desires. At the time of her first revolution France was warlike, because others compelled her to be so. She was attacked, and she rolled back the tide of conquest upon her invaders. But now that nobody attacks her, she can devote all her resources to peaceful amelioration, without abandoning a firm and honourable policy.'

Now, does that look as if you had been wisely spending your money in fortifying yourselves, and keeping up your enormous standing armaments, because certain parties, who are interested in clothing regiments, or being admirals, with nothing to do, choose to tell you that the French people are a mighty hobgoblin, ready to come over and devour you some morning. I have dwelt longer on this subject, because what I stated with reference to the great mass of the French people last year was perverted: I said that property in France was more divided than in any other country in the world. I said there were 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 of real proprietors in France. The whole soil of that vast empire—and it is the richest on the surface of Europe—is cut up in small properties, held in fee-simple by those who cultivate it. And when those who write in certain aristocratic journals talk of dangers arising to a country from the minute subdivision of its property, I am very much disposed to whisper in their ears whether the lessons of history have not taught us that the danger is wholly different. Let them point out the nation that has been ruined because its property was in too many hands. Does not ruin rather proceed from property being accumulated by a small number of persons, and the consequent indulgence of luxury and corruption by the few, and the degradation and misery of the mass? The argument I drew last year, and which I repeat here now, confirmed by experience since, is this, that the people in France, being nearly all proprietors, and having to pay for any war they may wish to carry on, will not

vote for a war, as they would have to vote for more taxation. I believe that Louis Napoleon, Cavaignac, and Guizot, whose book was published only yesterday, and every man in France, including M. Thiers, will agree with me, that if there be one passion more predominant than another among the mass of the French people, it is the desire for peace. But I do not confine myself to France. I will take Germany; I will take Italy; and I ask, where, amidst their convulsions—where monarchs have abdicated, where popes and potentates have run away in the disguises of lacqueys, or gone down on their knees before the mob in their ascendant—where, in all Europe, has there been among the mass of the people one sign or symptom of a desire for aggressive war on their neighbours?

Beware of another mystification. One of the most favourite of the enemy's devices is this—they raise a confusion in your minds by pointing to the internal disorders in foreign countries, and persuade you it is a state of war. I told you the people abroad were for peace, and so they are; but when the revolutions broke out, these fallacy-mongers exclaimed, 'Here's Cobden, just come back from the Continent, tells us the people are all for peace—now they are all for war.' They have been in a state of revolution to obtain precisely the same ends for which this country went through a revolution two centuries ago. And though in France the gain, even in the way of practical liberty, has not been so great as in other countries—for they had a great amount of practical freedom before their last revolution—yet, when you compare the state of Germany and Italy with what it was when I was there not two years ago, I say that, with their convulsions, slight and evanescent compared with our war against prerogative under our first Charles, Germany and Italy have gained an amount of freedom which required ten years' civil war in England to achieve. I left them in those countries with every newspaper and every book under the strict control of the censor. I left them with closed courts of justice administering law, not by oral testimony in presence of the

The revolutions of 1848.

accused, but by written documentary evidence. I left them without a representative form of government, without trial by jury; and now, though they may blunder and stumble in the path of freedom, they are at least in the highway for obtaining the same constitutional privileges—as soon as they can use them they may have them—as we have ourselves. In spite of all the attempts of the press and public men to cry out 'Reaction,' and applaud the despots and their soldiers, who are willing to fight for tyranny, I, in the presence of this great assembly and in their name, do express sympathy for the people who are struggling for their liberties. Do not think I am talking to you of politics foreign to your interests here. It is by studied misrepresentation of what is going on upon the Continent that our enormous standing armaments are maintained and defended in this country. I say that the progress of constitutional rights on the Continent must be favourable to the preservation of peace, because I think I have proved to you that the mass of the people on the Continent, like the mass of the people in this country, are favourable to peace, and averse to war.

But you have another safeguard. I defy you to show me how any Government or people on the Continent can strengthen themselves, even if they choose to carry on a war of conquest. Let France invade Germany, it only makes Germany unite like one man—the whole Teutonic race are united as one man to repel the French. What is their predominant sentiment? The union of Germany, not for aggressive force, but for defensive succour. What is the cry in Italy? Italian nationality. What is the contest between Lombardy and Austria? The house of Austria may call Lombardy part of its territory, but there is another race, the Latin race, which says, 'We will not be governed by a Teutonic race;' and, though the Austrians may keep down the Italians by Radetzki and his 100,000 troops, Lombardy will be a source of weakness, not of strength, to them. I defy you to show me any partition

New limits to conquest.

where an accession of territory has not been rather a source of weakness than of strength. Take the very worst that can happen. Suppose any power on the Continent is going to attack its neighbour, is there any reason why we should be armed to the teeth in order to take part in the struggle? In ancient times, when the people were counted as nothing, and when sovereigns told out their subjects as a shepherd would his flock; when a royal marriage united the crowns of two kingdoms, and the people of both became the willing subjects, or even serfs, of the one sovereign, there might have been danger in an acquisition of territory. But now that the people count everywhere for something, and we see on the Continent of Europe great lines of demarcation of race—the Italian Peninsula, for instance, one; Spain, another; Germany, another—and when you find the great mosaic mass of Austrian dominion broken up, as it were, into Sclaves and Magyars, I see new limits assigned to conquest. I repeat, there is no longer any reason to fear that one empire will take possession, by force of arms, of its neighbour's territory; but, if it should, the accession of territory would be a source of weakness, not of strength. Take it at the worst, then; let the nations of the Continent attack each other; who is coming to attack you, if you only let their politics alone?

This brings me to another position which has an important bearing on the reduction of our armaments, and that is, we must let other people manage their own affairs. The Spaniards, who have very wise maxims, say, 'A fool knows more of what is going on in his own house than a wise man does in that of his neighbour.' Now, if we will apply that to nations, mind our own business, and give foreigners the credit of being able to manage their own concerns better than we can do for them, or they with our interference, it will save us a great deal of money, and they will have their affairs settled better and sooner than if we intermeddled with them. But what are we doing? There cannot be a petty squabble in any country in Europe or the

Policy of non-interference.

globe, but we must have a great fleet of line-of-battle ships sent from England to take part in it. We have just interfered between Naples and Sicily—what is the consequence? We are detested by both parties. In all Italy it is the same. They speak of Englishmen with contempt and execration; not because they undervalue our qualities as men—no, they pay as high a tribute to the qualities of Englishmen as we could desire—but, as a nation, as a Government, interfering with their politics, from one end of the Peninsula to the other, the Italians cordially hate and detest us. So with regard to Spain—we have spent hundreds of millions on Spain, and what is the present state of feeling there? I travelled from one end of Spain to the other, and I never heard the name of the Duke of Wellington mentioned, although he fought their battles, as we persuade ourselves—I never saw his portrait or bust through all my travels, but I saw Napoleon's and his marshals' everywhere. At this very moment, Napoleon and France are more popular in Spain than England and Englishmen. It is the same in Greece—the same in Portugal. The English people are hated, because we interfere with their politics. Is not that a very undignified attitude for a great nation like this to occupy? If we kept aloof from their squabbles, and contented ourselves with setting foreigners a good example—if we put our own houses in order—if we set our mud cabins in Ireland in order—we should show a great deal more common sense than in attempting to manage the affairs of other nations when we are not responsible for their government. But an argument has been used why we should interfere; and I like to hear it, for it shows that our opponents are at their last extremity. They say, 'If we don't interfere France will interfere;' and so it is—we have sent a fleet to Naples, because the French had a fleet there. I remember, at the last stage of the anti-corn law agitation, our opponents were driven to this position—'Free trade is a very good thing, but you cannot have it until other countries adopt it too;' and I used to say, 'If free trade be a good thing for us, we will have it: let others take it, if it be a good for them; if

not, let them do without it.' So I say now, if our constant interference with the affairs of the Continent be a costly, useless, pernicious policy for us, and if France—if Austria, choose to adopt that policy and ruin themselves by it, let them do so, but don't let us follow their example. This is common sense, although it does not pervade high quarters in this country.

We have another argument to meet. We are told we must keep up enormous armaments, because we have got so many colonies. People tell me I want to abandon our colonies; but I say, do you intend to hold your colonies by the sword, by armies, and ships of war? That is not a permanent hold upon them. I want to retain them by their affections. If you tell me that our soldiers are kept for their police, I answer, the English people cannot afford to pay for their police. The inhabitants of those colonies are a great deal better off than the mass of the people of England—they are in the possession of a vast deal more of the comforts of life than the bulk of those paying taxes here; they have very few of those taxes that plague us here so much—excise, stamps, and taxes, those fiscal impediments which beset you every day in your callings, are hardly known in our colonies. Our colonies are very able to protect themselves. Every man among them has his fowling-piece, and, if any savages come to attack them, they can defend themselves. They have another guarantee—if civilized men treat savages like men, there is never any occasion to quarrel with them. With regard to our navy, they tell us it is necessary because of our trade with the colonies. I should have thought it was just that trade which wanted no navy at all. It is a sort of coasting trade; our ships are at home when they get to our colonies. We don't want any navy to protect our trade with America, which is a colony emancipated; and we may thank our stars it has broke loose; it never would have been such a customer if the aristocracy of England had held that field of patronage for their younger sons. You don't want a ship of war to

The colonial argument.

protect your trade with the United States; and last year you exported to them £10,900,000 of your produce, more by upwards of a million than you exported to all your colonies together, India excepted. Sir William Molesworth, in that admirable speech of his on the colonies, showed that, by a better administration, not by taking away altogether your force from the colonies, but by an improved system of government, you might save £2,000,000 per annum.[1]

You have to make up your mind to one thing—you cannot afford all this waste. It is not a matter of choice with you. I tell you, you are spending too much money as a nation. It is not merely your general taxation—your local taxation likewise oppresses you. Mark me, the greater the cost of your armaments falling on general taxation, the more you will have to spend in poor rates and other taxes. The more you waste of the capital of the country, the more people will be wanting employment; and when they want employment, it is the law of England that the poorest, who are the first to begin to suffer under a course of national extravagance or decay, have the right to come to those above them and demand subsistence, under the name of poor rate; so that, in proportion as the extravagance of Government increases, poor rates and the expenses of a repressive police increase also. You must, therefore, lessen the national expenditure, or the catastrophe cannot long be deferred. I have detained you already too long, but there is one thing I wish to impress upon you before I sit down. It is of paramount moment to the English people that we should not allow ourselves to entertain an undue or exaggerated notion of our own importance as a nation, or to take a too unfavourable view of other countries. It is through your national pride that cunning people manage to extract taxes from you. They persuade you that nothing can be done abroad unless you do it; and that you are so superior to all other countries,

Results of wasteful expenditure.

[1] See later, p. 399, *sqq.*

that your next neighbour, France, for instance, is nothing but a band of brigands, and unless you are constantly on the watch, they will be ready to pounce upon you and carry off your property. Until, as a nation, we give credit to other people for being able to work out their own liberties—unless we believe there is something of honour and honesty in other countries to shield us from unjust aggression on their part, we must always be armed to secure ourselves from the imaginary attacks of our neighbours. Other nations are far too intelligent to require that we should always be armed to the teeth, in order to let them know how strong we are. I don't believe that the French will come to attack the English merely because we happen to have a few less ships of war or a few less regiments than we now possess. Their Government will look far beyond your manifestation of force. They will inquire what is the wealth, the power, the public spirit of our people? are we a contented nation, attached to our institutions, governed well, united as one man against an enemy? and if they see the indications of this latent national power, depend on it they won't wantonly rush into war with us, even if we do not always go armed to the teeth, and do not always show ourselves ready for fighting.

Take the case of the United States. America has three times, within the last few years, had a misunderstanding with two of the greatest Powers of the world—twice with England, once with France. We had the Maine boundary and the Oregon territory to settle with the United States, and America had her quarrel with France, arising out of a claim for compensation of £1,000,000, which the French Government refused to pay. What was the issue of those controversies? When the claim was refused by France, General Jackson, then the head of the American Government, published his declaration, that if the money was not paid forthwith, he would seize French ships and pay himself. At that time—I have it from Americans themselves—the French had three times the force of ships-of-war

The case of America.

that America had; Admiral Mackau was in the Gulf of Florida with a fleet large enough to ravage the whole coast of America and bombard her towns; but did France rush into war with America? She paid the money. Why? Because she knew well, if she provoked an unjust war with the United States, their men-of-war were nothing compared with the force that would swarm out of every American port when brought into collision with another country. France knew that America had the larger mercantile marine; and, though at first the battle might be to the stronger in an armed fleet, in the end it would be that country which had the greatest amount of public spirit, and the greatest number of mercantile ships and sailors. What was the case with England? In 1842 there was a talk of war with America, on account of the Maine boundary question. Bear in mind that America never spent more than £1,200,000 on her navy, in any year of peace previous to 1842. We are spending this year £7,000,000 or £8,000,000; but will anybody tell me that America fared worse in that dispute because her resources in ships-of-war were far inferior to ours? No; but we increased our navy, and we had a squadron of evolution, as it was called. America never mounted a gun at New York to prevent the bombardment of the city; but did she fare the worse? We sent a peer of the realm (Lord Ashburton) to Washington; it was on American soil that the quarrel was adjusted, and rumour does say that America made a very good bargain. It is the spirit of a people, the prosperity of a people, the growing strength, the union, the determination of a people, that command respect.

Now, what I want you as a nation to do, is to believe that other countries will just take the same measure of us that we took of America. They won't come and attack us merely because we reduce our armaments to £10,000,000. On the contrary, other countries, I believe, will follow our example. I believe, if we are not very quick, France will set us the example. I see General Cavaignac, and all their best men,

advocating a reduction of the army. A formal proposal has been made to reduce their army one-half, as the only means of saving the country from financial confusion. Let us encourage these good men in their good work. And, though our Government do not set the example, let us, from this Free Trade Hall, tell General Cavaignac and his followers that we will undertake to reduce the cost of our fighting establishments, man for man, as they do theirs.

When they tell us that we are in danger of a collision at any moment with foreign powers—when they tell us that a couple of drunken captains of frigates at the Antipodes may suddenly embroil this country in war with France, and that this is a reason why we ought always to be armed and prepared for hostile conflict—I ask you, as reasonable Christian men, why should we not adopt the proposal which has been made at so many public meetings, and which I shall submit to the House next session—to insert a clause in a treaty with foreign nations, binding each other that in case of collision between two drunken captains, or a dispute arising from the conduct of some indiscreet consul at Tahiti—in case of a misunderstanding on any point whatever, each should be bound to submit the subject-matter of dispute to arbitration—that, instead of drawing the sword being the point of honour to which nations shall resort, it shall be to fulfil honourably the treaty by which the dispute shall be referred to arbitration, and abide honourably by the decision when pronounced?

Arbitration.

To conclude, I tell you, if anything is to be done in this matter of financial reform, it must be done by the people out of doors. There never was a time when independent men in the House of Commons—I mean the very few independent, both by circumstances and by feeling, of both the two great parties who have hitherto divided sway in this country, were so weak as they are at this moment. And why? Because the party in power is nominally the same party as ourselves; because their followers mingle more or less with ourselves,

and we are neutralized at every turn, or, at all events, we find a wet blanket on our shoulders, whenever we go into the House of Commons. Now, if you want to carry financial reform, it must be carried precisely in the same way that Free Trade was carried. You must speak out of doors in a voice that will be heard and felt in the House of Commons. The representative system, as we have got it, is a very clumsy machine. The House of Commons nominally has to look after the purse-strings of the people, and see that taxes are lightly and equably laid on; but you are obliged to leave your business, and form financial associations, to compel the House of Commons to do that which it is designed to do, but does not. There is no help for it. We must do it ourselves. I honour that excellent and tried veteran friend of ours—Mr. Hume. I admire his efforts; I venerate the constancy, the downright pluck, the granite-like hardihood and consistency of the man, who, through good and bad repute, for thirty-seven years, has advocated the people's interest in the most material and useful form. We will back him. We will strengthen his hands, and enable him to do that in future which he has not been able to do in times past.

II.—AN INTERNATIONAL REDUCTION OF NAVIES

On June 17th, 1851, Cobden brought forward a motion in the House of Commons asking Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary, to arrange with France a mutual reduction of armaments. Some parts of the speech are omitted as having only a temporary interest.

I WISH the real scope and purport of my motion to be understood at the outset, so that it may not be misrepresented in the debate. I do not propose, then, to discuss or entertain the amount of the armies maintained upon the Continent. When I speak of warlike preparations I allude to naval preparations and fortifications. Our army is maintained without reference to the armies of the Continent, and the armies of the Continent are never framed or maintained with reference to the army of England. In speaking of armies, which I regard as the standing curse of the present generation, the matter is usually complicated by questions of a purely domestic character. I am told that the armies of the Continent are not kept up by the Governments of those countries for the sake of meeting foreign enemies, but for the purpose of repressing their own subjects. This being the case, I am asked how I can persuade foreign Governments to reduce their armies, seeing that they were not kept up from the apprehension of a foreign foe, but in order to maintain internal order, as it is called. Now, I believe, if I can succeed in my motion with France, the examples of the two countries may be at once followed by other countries in the reduction of their navies, and that, if a reduction in the naval forces and fortifications of England and France takes place, other countries may afterwards follow with a reduction in their armies.

I presume it will be admitted that the maintenance of a naval force, beyond what is necessary in time of peace for the protection of commerce, is an evil; but I shall be told it is a necessary evil. If I ask why, it will be said, 'Because other countries are armed as well as ourselves.' Well, admitting that, and assuming that France and England maintain a certain amount of naval force, not for the purpose of protecting commerce or acting as the police of the seas, but in order to hold themselves in a menacing attitude towards each other, that must be an unmitigated evil. It it not only pure waste, but it would be better and more economical if both voted that money and threw it into the sea, for both would then save the labour which is employed upon ships of war, and which might be more productively occupied. These two countries will be equally well prepared for warfare with each other if they reduce their force to one as if they both maintain their force at twenty, as their relative proportions will remain the same, and no advantage can be gained, in the event of hostilities, by keeping up this unnecessary force.

The rivalry of France and England.

Why do I assume that England arms against France, and France against England? I am prepared to show that it is the avowed policy of both countries to arm themselves, so as to be prepared to meet the armaments provided by the other country. In the debate in the French Chamber of Deputies in 1846, when a motion was made for a vote of 100,000,000f. for a great augmentation of the navy, M. Thiers, who carried the resolution for this augmentation, said—

> 'There is nothing offensive to England in citing her example when our navy is under consideration, any more than there would be in speaking of Prussia, Austria, or Russia, if we were deliberating upon the strength of our army. We pay England the compliment of thinking only of her when determining our naval force; we never heed the ships which sally forth from Trieste or Venice, —we care only for those that leave Portsmouth or Plymouth.'

I am told that the noble Lord below me was in the Chamber

of Deputies when this speech was made. The noble Viscount (Palmerston), in the debate on the financial statement in 1848, said—

'So far from its affording any cause of offence to France that we should measure our navy by such a standard, I am sure any one who follows the debates in the French Chambers, when their naval estimates come under discussion, must know that they follow the same course,—adopting the natural and only measure in such cases, namely, the naval force which other nations may have at the same time.'

In the same debate on the financial statement in 1848, the noble Lord (John Russell), after showing that the expenditure for the navy in France had increased since 1833 from £2,280,000 to £3,902,000, proceeded to observe—

'I am not alluding at all—it never has been the custom to allude, and I think we are quite right in that respect—to what may be the military force of foreign Powers. I do not, therefore, allude at all to the amount of the standing army that is kept up in France, or in Austria, or in Prussia, or in other foreign countries; but so great an increase in naval estimates, I think, does require the attention, and, at all events, should be within the knowledge of the House.'

I have two objections to that policy; first, it is an irritating policy, having a constant tendency to increase the evil, and to which I see no remedy unless it is in some way met; and secondly, it is a proceeding on exaggerated reports and ideas spread upon the subject of the armaments of the two countries. When these things are exposed, they always bear the trace of great exaggeration. I will mention an instance. Our naval estimates were greatly increased in 1845. The French were alarmed. A Committee of the Chamber of Peers was appointed to inquire into the state of the French navy. They made a report. In that report they said—

Exaggeration and see-saw.

'We have now to announce the execution of a great scheme which the English Government is pursuing with its usual foresight

and which cannot fail to have a vast influence upon the naval policy of other countries.'

Now, in that Report, it is broadly stated that eight steam guard ships were being prepared by the British Government against France; and there was some ground for it, inasmuch as eight guard-ships were being altered with screw-propellers; but when I sat on the Committee on the Navy in 1848, I found, on examining the authorities of the Admiralty, that only four of these steam guard-ships were ever completed, and that, instead of being of the character stated in the Report, they were only capable of going to sea for four days instead of fifteen, inasmuch as they were not prepared for carrying a large supply of coal. I will give another illustration of how the two countries play at see-saw in this respect. After the proceedings of England in 1845, and those of France in 1846, Mr. Ward, who was then Secretary of the Admiralty, came down to the House and proposed again an increase of our navy, citing the example of France. The proceedings of France, he said, ought to be a lesson to us, and imposed a great responsibility upon those who were in power in this country. But the British Government could not stop there. They ran the estimate up to 42,000, or, I believe, to 44,000 men. That produced its fruits in France. I hold in my hand an extract from a Report of the National Assembly on the Navy in 1849. It says—

'Let us see whether foreign Powers really show us the example of a reduction of naval armaments. This very spring, England has voted 40,000 men for the sea service. This vote will amount to £6,000,000 sterling, without including the cost of artillery, etc., which is defrayed out of the Ordnance estimates. We content ourselves with twenty-four vessels of the line afloat, and sixteen in an advanced state upon the stocks, for our peace establishment; the English have seventy afloat, besides those in course of building. With our peace establishment, such as it was fixed in 1846, we should be one-third inferior in strength to the English navy.'

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One of the best things this House has done for a long time

was to suspend the other night the works for the fortification of Alderney. These works are a menace and an affront to France, and are meant as a rival to Cherbourg. Now, Cherbourg, as every one knows who has sailed along the coast, is a most useful, and valuable, and indispensable port of refuge for merchant ships—in fact, a breakwater at Cherbourg might have been made by subscription from all the maritime States of Europe, so important is it to all who sail along that coast. But Alderney could mean nothing but a great fortified place, within a few miles of France, intended to menace that country. Now, these fortifications arise out of a panic in England. If any one could get at the professional springs applied to panic, it would be a most amusing history. In 1845 the country was led to suppose that we were to be invaded by some maritime Power. A number of engineers had a roving commission to go along the coast and point out places where money could be spent in raising fortifications, and when they had exhausted the coast of England they went over to Jersey and Alderney. I have heard the evidence of some of those gallant gentlemen. One of them said that when he went down to Plymouth he found the people there expecting their throats to be cut next day; and, said he, 'strange as it may appear, I shared their alarm.' It was understood that this panic had projected our harbours of refuge, as they were called, upon which it was suggested that between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 should be expended. It was under the same panic that the works at Keyham, upon which £1,200,000 have been wasted, and the works at Alderney, which have cost four times as much as the value of the fee-simple of the whole island, were projected. And thus it is that France has now an eager rivalry with us. M. Chevalier, in a pamphlet which he has published on the subject, endeavouring to stem this torrent of rivalry, says that while England has projected her fortifications on the coast of England, France at the same time has projected works to the extent of between £10,000,000 and £11,000,000 sterling, without including the

Alderney and Keyham.

fortifications of Paris, and he gives a comparative estimate of the increased expenditure both of France and England from 1838 to 1847, and shows that in that period England and France have constantly augmented their naval expenditure to the extent of between £13,000,000 and £14,000,000 sterling, and that, both going on in that neck-and-neck race of rivalry, the two countries have, in fact, spent nearly the same amount.

Now, is there a remedy for that rivalry? Is it possible to bring human reason to bear upon that mass of folly? I am sure that gentlemen who think it necessary to have a precedent for what they do, will admit the force of the precedent I am about to quote. I am not going back to 1787, to the demolition of Dunkirk, or to an armed neutrality, or to an arrangement made for a temporary and specific object. But there is a case in modern times bearing upon this question. There was a convention between this country and the United States to limit the amount of force in the lakes that separate Canada from America. The convention was this—

The lakes convention.

'Arrangements between the United States and Great Britain, between Richard Rush, Esq., acting as Secretary of the Department of State, and Charles Bagot, his Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary, etc., April, 1817.—The naval force to be maintained upon the American lakes by His Majesty and the Government of the United States shall henceforth be confined to the following vessels on each side, that is :—On Lake Ontario, to one vessel not exceeding 100 tons burden, and armed with one 18-pound cannon; on the upper lakes to two vessels, not exceeding like burden each, and armed with like force; on the waters of Lake Champlain, to one vessel, not exceeding like burden and armed with like force. All other armed vessels on these lakes shall be forthwith dismantled, and no other vessels of war shall be built there or armed. If either party should hereafter be desirous of annulling this stipulation, and should give notice to that effect to the other party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice. The naval force so to be limited shall be restricted to such services as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other party.'

It was entered into in 1817, at the close of the war with the United States, during the progress of which, in 1814, the Duke of Wellington wrote from Paris to Sir G. Murray as follows :—

'I have told the ministers repeatedly that a naval superiority on the lakes is a *sine quâ non* of success in war on the frontier of Canada, even if our object should be solely defensive ; and I hope that when you are there they will take care to secure it for you.'

So that, in case of any rupture between England and America, the occupation of the lakes was considered by that great authority to be necessary for success in hostilities ; and yet notwithstanding that, immediately after the war, the two countries had the good sense to limit the amount of force upon the lakes. And what has been the result of that friendly convention ? Not only has it had the effect of reducing the force, but of abolishing it altogether. When I sat on the Committee I did not find that any vessel was left on the lakes as an armed force. I would ask, then, whether it is not possible to devise some plan, if not by actual convention, as in the case of America, yet by some communication with a power like France, and say, 'We are mutually building so many vessels each in the year ; our relative force is as three to two, and if we increase it tenfold, still the relations will be the same. Will it not be possible, by a friendly understanding, to agree that we shall not go on in this rivalry, but that we shall put a mutual check upon this mutual injury ?' Lord Auckland stated before the Committee in 1848 that the amount of force left in the Pacific was always governed by the force left by other powers.

Now, I may be told that I am dealing merely with France ; but there are only two countries of any importance as naval powers, namely France and Russia—for America has set an example, and is out of the question. When California was discovered, America might have placed two or three line-of-battle ships off that coast, but she withdrew the only one she had there, and turned her artisans

The naval Powers.

and shipwrights to construct some of the most magnificent steam-vessels that were ever seen; and yet her commerce was extending, as our own is. The honourable member for Stafford (Mr. Urquhart) may, perhaps, refer me to Russia; but I contend that no country that has not a mercantile marine can be a great naval country. You may build up a navy as Mehemet Ali has done, and put his fellahs on board, but if you have not a mercantile marine you never can become a great naval power. Russia has, no doubt, a great number of ships at Cronstadt—I have seen them all—but if Russia had power she kept it at home; and there may be very good reasons why she did so, for I have heard remarks from American skippers lying at Cronstadt to the effect that her vessels were not much to be admired. She has about 30,000 sailors, but they are men taken from the interior, unaccustomed to sea duty, and are, of course, a complete laughing-stock to British seamen. I do not consider that any country like America or England, carrying on an enormous commerce, and with 100,000 mercantile sailors, can ever be endangered by a country having no mercantile marine. With reference to our distant stations, at all events America offers no obstacle, but rather invites us to this course by her example. France is the only country that presents herself with any force upon foreign stations; and I ask, is it impracticable to carry out the same rule in regard to France that had been agreed to with the United States, or are we to go on *ad infinitum*, wasting our resources, and imposing unnecessary taxes in order to keep up this waste?

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If there is not a disposition on the part of the people of the Continent to go to war, where is the use or the necessity of the enormous naval force which France keeps up? Surely there must be as great a disposition on the part of that country as of this to reduce the burdens of taxation by diminishing expenditure. I have conversed with French statesmen upon this subject, and when I have put it to them, as I have done

to English statesmen, they have admitted that the plan which I propose would be most desirable for them. They say that they keep up their navy because England keeps up hers, but that it would be the greatest possible relief to them to be able to reduce it. I believe that if our Government made a friendly proposal to France, it would be met in an amicable spirit. France does not pretend that she is as strong as England by sea, and she does not aim at being thought so, for it is invariably admitted in the discussions in the French Chamber that she has no pretensions to rival England in the amount of her naval force. I say, then, that if a friendly proposal of this sort were only made to France, I fully believe it would be accepted. This leads me to what I consider the strongest reason why this system should be abolished, and it is this—that while the spirit of rivalry is maintained by two countries so equal in point of resources, taking the army and navy together, it is impossible that one could ever gain a permanent advantage over the other. If one were exceedingly weak and the other strong, and the strong could have some extraordinary motive to oppress the weaker, I might despair to convince by argument; but the case of England and France is very different. Whenever England increases her armaments and fortifications France does the same, and *vice versâ*. We are pursuing a course, therefore, which holds out to neither country a prospect of any permanent gain. We are not actuated by motives of ambition or aggression, but are simply acting for self-defence, and no rational mind in either country supposes anything else, than that a war between the two countries must be injurious to both. Every country will have an interest in putting an end to this mutual rivalry and hostility by the course which I recommend. I shall be anxious to hear what the noble lord says upon this. I do not ask the noble lord to do it in any specific form. My resolution merely says that a communication should be entered into in a spirit of amity with France. I do not stipulate for a diplomatic note in this form or that. I shall be perfectly satisfied if I see the attempt

made, for the objection that I have to our system of policy is that there never has been an attempt made to stay the progress of this rivalry—there never has been anything done that could by possibility tend to bring the two countries to an understanding. All I stipulate for is, that diplomacy shall put itself a little more into harmony with the spirit of the times, and shall do that work which the public thinks ought to be the occupation of diplomacy. I shall be told that it is an affair for public opinion, or for the operation of individual enterprise. Why, public opinion and individual enterprise are doing much to bring England and France together. Compare the present state of things with that which existed twenty-five years ago. I remember that at that time there were but two posts a week between London and Paris, Tuesdays and Fridays. Down to 1848, thirty-four hours were allowed for transmitting a post to Paris; we now make the journey in eleven hours. Where there used to be thousands passing and repassing, there are now tens of thousands. Formerly, no man could be heard in our smaller towns and villages speaking a foreign language, let it be what language it might, but the rude and vulgar passer-by would call him a Frenchman, and very likely insult him. We have seen a great change in all this. In this, the first year of the second half of the nineteenth century, we have seen a most important change. We are witnessing now what a few years ago no one could have predicted as possible. We see men meeting together from all countries of the world, more like the gatherings of nations in former times, when they came up for a great religious festival, —we find men speaking different languages, and bred in different habits, associating in one common temple erected for their reception and gratification. I ask, then, that the Government of the country should put itself in harmony with the spirit of the age, and should endeavour to do something to follow in the wake of what private enterprise and public opinion are achieving. I have the fullest conviction that one step taken in that direction will be attended with important

consequences, and will redound to the honour and credit of any foreign minister who, casting aside the old and musty maxims of diplomacy, shall step out and take in hand the task which I have humbly submitted to the noble lord (Palmerston). I beg to move 'An address to her Majesty, praying that she will direct the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to enter into communication with the Government of France, and endeavour to prevent in future that rivalry of warlike preparations in time of peace which has hitherto been the policy of the two Governments, and to promote, if possible, a mutual reduction of armaments.

III.—ON THE CRIMEAN WAR AND THE PATRIOTISM OF ITS OPPONENTS

John Bright's Letter to Absalom Watkin

Turkey began the war with Russia in November, 1853. From that time Lord Aberdeen's administration rapidly drifted into war, though the actual declaration of hostilities did not take place until March 27th of the following year. The following letter was written in reply to Mr. Absalom Watkin, of Manchester, who had invited Bright to a meeting about to be held for the Patriotic Fund, and stating that the war with Russia was justified by the authority of Vattel—a writer on international law. In the original edition Bright's letter was headed with the following quotation from Burke:—

'If I had not lived long enough to be little surprised at anything, I should have been in some degree astonished at the continued rage of several gentlemen, who, not satisfied with carrying fire and sword into America, are animated nearly with the same fury against those neighbours of theirs, whose only crime it is, that they have charitably and humanely wished them to entertain more reasonable sentiments, and not always to sacrifice their interest to their passion. All this rage against unresisting dissent convinces me, that at bottom they are far from satisfied they are in the right. For what is it they would have? War? They certainly have at this moment the blessing of something that is very like one; and if the war they enjoy at present be not sufficiently hot and extensive, they may shortly have it as warm and as spreading as their hearts can desire. Is it the force of the kingdom they call for? They have it already; and if they choose to fight the battles in their own person, nobody prevents their setting sail to the scene of war in the next transports. . . . They are continually boasting of unanimity, or calling for it. But before this unanimity can be a matter either of wish or congratulation, we ought to be pretty sure that we are engaged in a rational pursuit. Frenzy does not become a slighter distemper on account of the number of those who may be infected with it.

Delusion and weakness produce not one mischief the less, because, they are universal.'—(*Burke on the American War, in his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.*)

Rhyl, North Wales, October 19th.

My dear Sir,—I think, on further consideration, you will perceive that the meeting on Thursday next would be a most improper occasion for a discussion as to the justice of the war. Just or unjust, the war is a fact, and the men whose lives are miserably thrown away in it have clearly a claim upon the country, and especially upon those who, by the expression of opinions favourable to the war, have made themselves responsible for it. I cannot, therefore, for a moment, appear to discourage the liberality of those who believe the war to be just, and whose utmost generosity, in my opinion, will make but a wretched return for the ruin they have brought upon hundreds of families.

With regard to the war itself, I am not surprised at the difference between your opinion and mine, if you decide a question of this nature by an appeal to *Vattel.* The 'law of nations' is not my law, and at best it is a code full of confusion and contradictions, having its foundation on custom, and not on a higher morality; and on custom which has always been determined by the will of the strongest. It may be a question of some interest whether the first crusade was in accordance with the law and principles of *Vattel;* but whether the first crusade was just, and whether the policy of the crusades was a wise policy, is a totally different question. I have no doubt that the American War was a just war according to the principles laid down by the writers on the 'law of nations,' and yet no man in his senses in this country will now say that the policy of George III. towards the American colonies was a wise policy, or that war a righteous war. The French War, too, was doubtless just according to the same authorities; for there were fears, and anticipated dangers to be combated, and law and order to be sustained in Europe; and yet few intelligent men now believe the

French War to have been either necessary or just. You must excuse me if I refuse altogether to pin my faith upon *Vattel.* There have been writers on international law, who have attempted to show that private assassination and the poisoning of wells were justifiable in war: and perhaps it would be difficult to demonstrate wherein these horrors differ from some of the practices which are now in vogue. I will not ask you to mould your opinion on these points by such writers, nor shall I submit my judgment to that of *Vattel.*

The question of this present war is in two parts—first, was it necessary for us to interfere by arms in a dispute between the Russians and the Turks; and secondly, having determined to interfere, under certain circumstances, why was not the whole question terminated when Russia accepted the Vienna note? The seat of war is 3000 miles away from us. We had not been attacked—not even insulted in any way. Two independent Governments had a dispute, and we thrust ourselves into the quarrel. That there was some ground for the dispute is admitted by the four powers in the proposition of the Vienna note.[1] But for the English Minister at Constantinople

[1] All who have been, in any way, concerned in these negotiations on behalf of England, acknowledge this. Thus, Colonel Rose, who was *Chargé d'Affairs* at Constantinople, in Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's absence, in a despatch to Lord John Russell, dated March 7th, 1853, detailing a conversation he had just held with M. D'Ozeroff, the Russian Ambassador, represents himself to have said, 'that certainly the Ottoman Minister had been to blame in the matter of the Holy Places, but that he had been coerced.'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 87.

Again, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, writing to the Earl of Clarendon from 'Constantinople, April 9th, 1853,' says:—'Your Lordship will perceive that the Russian Ambassador does not object, by his demands, to such privileges as are known to have been obtained latterly by France, in favour of the Latins, and that his principal aim is to fix and secure the present state of possession and usage by that kind of formal and explicit agreement, which may preclude all further pretensions on the side of France, and make the Porte directly responsible to Russia for any future innovation respecting the Holy Places. *This is fair and reasonable enough in the view of an impartial observer.*'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 127.

Again, in a despatch, dated May 22nd, 1853, he says:—'It is but justice

and the Cabinet at home the dispute would have settled itself, and the last note of Prince Menschikoff would have been accepted, and no human being can point out any material

to admit that Russia had something to complain of in the affair of the Holy Places; nor can it be denied, that much remains to be done for the welfare and security of the Christian population in Turkey.'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 235.

Lord John Russell, in a despatch to Sir G. H. Seymour, dated 'Foreign Office, February 9th, 1854,' says:—'The more the Turkish Government adopts the rules of impartial law and equal administration, the less will the Emperor of Russia find it necessary to apply that exceptional protection which his Imperial Majesty has found so burthensome and inconvenient, THOUGH NO DOUBT PRESCRIBED BY DUTY, AND SANCTIONED BY TREATY.' His Lordship at the same time volunteered the following character of the Emperor of Russia and his policy:—'Upon the whole, her Majesty's Government are persuaded that NO COURSE OF POLICY CAN BE ADOPTED MORE WISE, MORE DISINTERESTED, MORE BENEFICIAL TO EUROPE, THAN THAT WHICH HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAS SO LONG FOLLOWED, and which will render his name more illustrious than that of the most famous Sovereigns who have sought immortality by unprovoked conquest and ephemeral glory.'—*Eastern Papers*, part v. p. 8.

The Earl of Clarendon, in a letter to Sir G. H. Seymour, dated 'Foreign Office, April 5th, 1853,' says:—'Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe was instructed to bear in mind that her Majesty's Government, without professing to give an opinion on the subject, were not insensible to the superior claims of Russia, both as respected the treaty obligations of Turkey, and the loss of moral influence that the Emperor would sustain throughout his dominions, if, in the position occupied by his Imperial Majesty, with reference to the Greek Church, he was to yield any privileges it had hitherto enjoyed to the Latin Church, of which the Emperor of the French claimed to be the protector.'—*Eastern Papers*, part v. p. 22.

To this may be added the testimony of one who, though not diplomatically engaged in the negotiations, is a competent and impartial witness, as he was on the spot during the very crisis of these transactions, viz. the Earl of Carlisle. Stating his belief that justice was on the side of the Turks, he adds:—'In giving this opinion, I do not so much allude to the actual propositions of Prince Menschikoff, for which in the outset some plausible and even some substantial grounds might be alleged; on the contrary, *I do not think it well for any Christian State to leave its co-religionists to the uncovenanted forbearance of Mussulman rulers.*'—*Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters*, p. 181.

difference between that note and the Vienna note, afterwards agreed upon and recommended by the Governments of England, France, Austria, and Prussia. But our Government would not allow the dispute to be settled. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe held private interviews with the Sultan—did his utmost to alarm him—insisted on his rejection of all terms of accommodation with Russia, and promised him the armed assistance of England if war should arise.[1]

The Turks rejected the Russian note, and the Russians crossed the Pruth, occupying the Principalities as a 'material guarantee.' I do not defend this act of Russia: it has always appeared to me impolitic and immoral; but I think it likely it could be well defended out of *Vattel*, and it is at least as justifiable as the conduct of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston in 1850, when they sent ten or twelve ships of

[1] While the proposal of Prince Menschikoff, which had been several times modified to meet the views of the Porte, was still before it, Lord Stratford writing to the Earl of Clarendon, on May 19th, 1853, says:—'On comparing notes with M. de la Cour, I found him under an impression that the Turkish Ministers were disposed to shrink from encountering the consequences of Prince Menschikoff's retirement in displeasure' (*Blue Book*, part i. p. 177)—that is, in other words, disposed to accept the note proposed by the Russian Plenipotentiary. But in a despatch written the very next day, May 20th, he describes the means he had employed to prevent their yielding to that disposition:—'In one of my preceding numbers I mentioned that I had seen the Sultan in private. The interview took place yesterday morning. Rifaat Pasha accompanied me to the Sultan's apartment, and then withdrew. Reminding the Sultan of the disposition he had shown to receive my counsels, I said that I had hitherto confided them to his ministers, not wishing to trespass personally on his Majesty's indulgence without necessity. I added that in the present critical juncture of affairs the case might be different, and his Majesty might like to know what I thought from my own lips. *I then endeavoured to give him a just idea of the degree of danger to which his Empire was exposed.* . . . I concluded by apprising his Majesty of what I had reserved for his private ear, in order that his ministers might take their decision without any bias from without, namely, that in the event of imminent danger I was instructed to request the Commander of her Majesty's forces in the Mediterranean to hold his squadron in readiness.'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 213.

war to the Piræus, menacing the town with a bombardment if the dishonest pecuniary claim made by Don Pacifico were not at once satisfied.[1]

But the passage of the Pruth was declared by England and France and Turkey not to be a *casus belli*. Negotiations were commenced at Vienna, and the celebrated Vienna note was drawn up. This note had its origin in Paris,[2] was agreed to by the Conference at Vienna, ratified and approved by the Cabinets of Paris and London,[3] and pronounced by all these

[1] The following is an extract from a despatch sent by Count Nesselrode to Baron Brunnow, in February, 1850, giving the Russian Government's estimation of that act of 'material guarantee,' on the part of England:—'It remains to be seen whether Great Britain, abusing the advantages which are afforded her by her immense maritime superiority, intends henceforth to pursue an isolated policy, without caring for those engagements which bind her to the other cabinets; *whether she intends to disengage herself from every obligation, as well as from all community of action, and to authorize all great powers, on every fitting opportunity, to recognize towards the weak no other rule but their own will, no other right but their own physical strength.* Your Excellency will please to read this despatch to Lord Palmerston, and to give him a copy of it.' But Russia did not go to war with England on account of this aggression on the rights and territories of an independent power.

[2] The Earl of Westmoreland writes to Lord Clarendon, under date of Vienna, July 25th, 1853:—'Count Buol stated that the note which had been proposed by M. Drouyn de Lhuys appeared to him to be the best foundation upon which we could proceed in the formation of the new one.' —*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 19.

[3] The Earl of Clarendon writes to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe from the 'Foreign Office, August 2nd, 1853. Her Majesty's Government have, in preference to all other plans, adhered to this project of note as the means best calculated to effect a speedy and satisfactory solution of the differences. They consider that it fully guards the principle for which throughout we have been contending, and *that it may therefore with perfect safety be signed by the Porte;* and they further hope that your Excellency, before the receipt of this despatch, will have found no difficulty in procuring the assent of the Turkish Government to *a project which the Allies of the Sultan unanimously concur in recommending for his adoption.*'—*Blue Book,* part ii. p. 27.

Lord Cowley, writing to Lord Clarendon from Paris, August 4th, 1853, says:—'M. Drouyn de Lhuys has profited by the passage of Mr. Tucker, returning by the *Caradoc*, to write to M. de la Cour, explaining why the French Government preferred the note which had been agreed to at

authorities to be such as would satisfy the honour of Russia, and at the same time be compatible with the 'independence and integrity' of Turkey and the honour of the Sultan. Russia accepted this note at once,[1]—accepted it, I believe, by telegraph, even before the precise words of it had been received in St. Petersburg.[2] Everybody thought the question now

Vienna, to that sent by Reschid Pasha from Constantinople, and instructing him *to use all his influence with the Porte to obtain its assent to the project recommended by the Four Powers*. I have had an opportunity of conversing with the Turkish Ambassador, and I was glad to find that his Excellency has written in the same sense to his Government.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 37.

[1] Sir G. H. Seymour, in a despatch to the Earl of Clarendon, dated 'St. Petersburg, August 5th, 1853,' says:—'It is my agreeable duty to acquaint your Lordship, that upon waiting upon the Chancellor this morning, he stated that he had the satisfaction of informing me, that the Emperor had signified his acceptance (*acceptation pure et simple*) of the *project de note* which had been received from Vienna, and a copy of which was dispatched on the 24th ultimo, from Vienna to Constantinople. Intelligence of the Emperor's decision will be sent off to-morrow to Baron Brunnow, and has already been conveyed by telegraph to Vienna.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 43.

Count Nesselrode conveys the acceptance, in the following language, in a despatch, dated 'St. Petersburg, August 6th, 1853,' and addressed to Baron Meyendorff:—'You are aware, M. le Baron, of our august master's very sincere desire to put an end, so far as depends on him, to the anxieties felt in Europe, perhaps with a certain degree of exaggeration, in regard to our present difference with Turkey. His Majesty accordingly directs you, M. le Baron, to declare to the Ministry of the Emperor Francis Joseph, and also to your colleagues of France, England, and Prussia, that for our part we accept in its present shape the last draft of note framed at Vienna.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 46.

[2] Sir J. H. Seymour, in a letter to Lord Clarendon, dated 'St. Petersburg, August 12th, 1853,' reporting a conversation he had just held with Count Nesselrode, says:—'The Chancellor resumed: "Now," he said, "about the delays which we are said to be desirous of interposing. The note which is intended to settle affairs reaches us on a Tuesday; on the following day our acceptance of it, without the slightest alteration, is sent off by telegraph as far as Warsaw, and from thence by a field-jäger to Vienna, where it arrives on Saturday; we subscribe, without hesitation, to the slight changes made in the note at London and Paris, and the acknowledgment of our acquiescence reaches us again on the following

settled; a Cabinet Minister assured me we should never hear another word about it; 'the whole thing is at an end,' he said, and so it appeared for a moment. But the Turk refused the note which had been drawn up by his own arbitrators, and which Russia had accepted.[1] And what did the Ministers say then, and what did their organ, the *Times*, say? They said it was merely a difference about words; it was a pity the Turk made any difficulty, but it would soon be settled.[2] But it was

Tuesday—a rapidity of communication of which there has been hitherto no example."'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 50.

Again, Count Nesselrode, in a note to Baron Meyendorff, dated 'St. Petersburg, September 7th, 1853,' says:—'On the mere receipt of the first draft of note agreed upon at Vienna, and even before we knew if it would be approved at London and Paris, we announced by telegraph our adhesion to it. The draft, as finally agreed upon, was sent to us at a later period, and although it had been modified in a sense which we could not mistake, nevertheless we did not on that account retract our adhesion or raise the slightest difficulty.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 101.

[1] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe writes to the Earl of Clarendon from Therapia, August 13th, 1853:—'At an early hour this morning I waited on Reshid Pasha, and communicated to him the substance of your instructions relative to the *project de note*, already received from Vienna. I called his attention to the strong and earnest manner in which that paper was recommended to the acceptance of the Porte, not only by her Majesty's Government, but also by the Cabinets of Austria, France, and Prussia. I reminded him of the intelligence which had arrived from St. Petersburg the day before by telegraph, purporting that the Emperor of Russia had signified his readiness to accept the same note.'—*Blue Book*, part iv. p. 69.

The next communication from Lord Stratford to the Earl of Clarendon, dated 'Therapia, August 14th, 1853,' is this:—'The *project de note* transmitted from Vienna, was laid before the Council to-day by Reshid Pasha. All the Ministers were present to the number of seventeen, including the Sheik ul Islam. *The majority of the Council declared it to be their firm intention to reject the new proposal, even if amendments were introduced.*'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 71.

And though they were afterwards induced somewhat to modify this very peremptory proceeding, yet the adoption of such a course shows the temper which prevailed in Turkey.

[2] Lord Cowley writes to Lord Clarendon from 'Paris, September 2nd, 1853. M. Drouyn de Lhuys stated to me yesterday, that upon the receipt of the intelligence from Constantinople, that the Porte had refused to accept the Vienna note, he had addressed a short despatch to M. de la

not settled, and why not? It is said that the Russian Government put an improper construction on the Vienna note. But it is unfortunate for those who say this, that the Turk placed

Cour, . . . to *express the disappointment with which the Emperor had learned the little attention paid by the Sultan's Ministers to the advice of his Majesty's Allies, and* to prescribe to M. de la Cour, to use all his efforts to induce the Porte to rescind its present decision.'—*Blue Book*, part iv. p. 87.

On the 10th September, 1853, Lord Clarendon writes a long despatch to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, examining the modifications proposed in the Vienna note by the Porte, and then adds:—'In conclusion, I have to observe, that these last conditions were not made in the note sent to Vienna, and which, without them, the Porte was prepared to sign as a final settlement of the question. There is, consequently, some reason to apprehend that they have since been brought forward, under the conviction that they could not be complied with; and should this unfortunately be the case, it will verify the prediction of your Excellency made as long ago as the 16th of July, that there would soon be more to apprehend from the rashness, than from the timidity of Turkish Ministers; and it will soon confirm the opinion lately communicated to Her Majesty's Government, and which they gather also, from the tone of your Excellency's despatches, namely—*that the feeling of the Turkish Government is a desire for war, founded on the conviction that France and England must still perforce side with Turkey, and that the war will, therefore, be a successful one for the Sultan, and obtain for him guarantees for the future, which will materially strengthen his tottering power.*'—*Blue Book*, part iv. p. 95.

The *Times* of September 17th, 1853, says:—'The obligations of the crisis are manifestly reciprocal. If Europe has its duties towards Turkey, Turkey has its duties towards Europe. If Europe owes protection to the Ottoman empire, that empire owes consideration to the peace of Europe. Either the Turks are competent to maintain their own rights or they are not. If they are, the whole of this discussion is eminently gratuitous, and Admiral Dundas may as well bring the fleet home from Besika Bay. If they are not, they must rely on the succour of others, and it is as clear as reason can make it that this succour must be accepted, not on their own terms, but on the terms of those who lend it. The Porte cannot pretend to combine the advantages of independence and protection. If it goes to war on its own decision and its own responsibility, it may commence hostilities at discretion; but, if it goes to war with British ships and French soldiers, it can have no right to wrest the initiative from the hands of England and France. The four Powers have publicly acknowledged their desire and their obligation to protect the independence of Turkey, but it is perfectly preposterous to demand that when the object can be

precisely the same construction upon it; and further, it is upon record that the French Government advised the Russian Government to accept it, on the ground that 'its general sense differed in nothing from the sense of the proposition of Prince Menschikoff.'[1] It is, however, easy to see why the Russian

attained by pacific negotiations they should select, in preference, the process of a war, which would infallibly be terrible for humanity, and might possibly be ruinous to themselves. Such a policy would be destructive even to the very empire under protection. *What would be the results of a general war no living being could venture to conjecture; but, if there is any one point certain, it is this*—THAT AT ITS CLOSE THERE WOULD BE NO TURKEY IN EUROPE.'

[1] The Vienna note was avowedly founded upon, and was indeed substantially the same as the French note, previously submitted to Russia, and which had been approved by the British Government; for the Earl of Clarendon writing to the Earl of Westmoreland, July 25th, 1853, in reference to the proposal of Count Buol to frame the Vienna note, says:—'We approve of the mode of proceeding, but can give no positive sanction until we know in what manner it differs from *the French note to which we have already agreed.*'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 1.

Now M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who was the original framer of the note, ought surely to be assumed to know in what sense it was intended to be understood. Well, this Minister, in writing to St. Petersburg to urge the acceptance of his note, says:—'That which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg ought to desire is an act of the Porte, which testifies that it has taken into serious consideration the mission of Prince Menschikoff, and that it *renders homage* to the sympathies which an identity of religion inspires in the Emperor Nicholas for all Christians of the Eastern rite.' And further on:—'*They* (the French Government) *submit it to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, with the hope that it will find that its* GENERAL SENSE DIFFERS IN NOTHING FROM THE SENSE OF THE PROPOSITION PRESENTED BY PRINCE MENSCHIKOFF, *and that it gives it satisfaction on all the essential points of its demands. The slight variation in the form of it will not be observed by the masses of the people, either in Russia or in Turkey. To their eyes the step taken by the Porte will preserve all the signification which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg wishes to give to it; and his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas will appear to them always as the powerful and respected protector of their religious faith.*'—Cited in Count Nesselrode's Memorandum of March 2nd, 1854, as published in the *Journal des Debats*.

It is impossible that anything can be more explicit than this. How can the English and French Governments pretend that Russia interpreted the note in a sense different from what they intended, when it is expressly stated that it was presented 'in the *hope* that its general sense differed in

Government should, when the Turks refused the award of their own arbitrators, restate its original claim, that it might not be damaged by whatever concession it had made in accepting the award; and this is evidently the explanation of the document issued by Count Nesselrode, and about which so much has been said. But, after this, the Emperor of Russia spoke to Lord Westmoreland on the subject at Olmutz, and expressed his readiness to accept the Vienna note, with any clause which the Conference might add to it, explaining and restricting its meaning;[1] and he urged that this should be done at once, as

nothing from the proposition of Prince Menschikoff,' and that it was designed to preserve in the eyes of the people, '*all the signification which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg wishes to give to it*'?

[1] Lord Westmoreland, writing from Olmutz, September 28th, 1853, to Lord Clarendon, says:—'That his Majesty (the Emperor of Russia) had authorized Count Nesselrode to confer with Count Buol *as to the adoption of any proposal by which a still further guarantee might be offered to the Porte*, that he would maintain inviolate the assurances he had given; that he sought no new right, no further extension of power; and that he looked to nothing but the maintenance of treaties and the *status quo* in religious matters. His Majesty had directed Count Nesselrode to report for his approval, any recommendation which, in furtherance of his object, he might, in conjunction with Count Buol, consider it advisable to adopt.'

And further on in the same despatch, Lord Westmoreland says:—'His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas, previous to his departure from Olmutz, which took place this evening, was pleased, on taking leave of me, *to refer to the decision he had taken with reference to this measure*, and to assure me that he had thus endeavoured, by allowing his former declarations to be strengthened by repetition, to give an additional proof of his desire to meet every legitimate wish which was expressed to him by those Powers.'

The following note 'explaining and restricting' the meaning of the Vienna note was accordingly adopted:—

'In recommending unanimously to the Porte to adopt the draft of note drawn up at Vienna, the Courts of Austria, France, England, and Prussia are convinced that that document by no means prejudices the sovereign rights and dignity of his Majesty the Sultan.

'That conviction is founded on the positive assurances which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg has given in regard to the intentions by which his Majesty the Emperor of Russia is animated in requiring a general guarantee of the religious immunities granted by the Sultans to the Greek Church within their empire.

he was anxious that his troops should recross the Pruth before winter.[1] It was in this very week that the Turks summoned a

'It results from these assurances that in requiring, in virtue of the principles laid down in the treaty of Kainardji, that the Greek religion and clergy should continue to enjoy their spiritual privileges under the protection of their sovereign the Sultan, the Emperor demands nothing contrary to the independence and the rights of the Sultan, nothing which implies an intention to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman empire.

'What the Emperor of Russia desires, is the strict maintenance of the religious *status quo* of his religion, that is to say, an entire equality of rights and immunities between the Greek Church and the other Christian communities, subjects of the Porte; consequently, the enjoyment by the Greek Church of the advantages already granted to those communities. He has no intention of resuscitating the privileges of the Greek Church which have fallen into disuse by the effect of time or administrative changes, but he requires that the Sultan should allow it to share in all the advantages which he shall hereafter grant to other Christian rites.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 129.

Lord Westmoreland, in transmitting this proposal to the English Government, adds:—'It is not believed that it ought to be considered in any way a condition onerous to the Porte, or unfitting for it to grant.' Now, let it be distinctly remarked, that not only Austria and Prussia, but France approved this proposal, and it was rejected at the instance of our Government alone. Lord Cowley, writing from Paris, October 4th, 1854, says to the Earl of Clarendon:—'I saw M. Drouyn de Lhuys later in the day. . . . He then said that the Emperor was inclined to view the proposed declaration favourably; that His Majesty thought that it guarded the points on which the French and English Governments had the most insisted.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 131.

Again, Lord Clarendon writes on October 7th, 1853, to Lord Cowley to this effect:—'On the 4th instant, Count Walewski informed me that the assurances as to the intentions of Russia contained in Count Buol's project of note, appeared satisfactory to the French Government, who were prepared with the concurrence of her Majesty's Government, to agree to the signature of that note by the Four Representatives in Constantinople, and that it should be offered to the Porte in exchange for the note originally sent from Vienna.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 140.

But our Government peremptorily rejected the proposal. 'Lord Clarendon writes to Lord A. Loftus, requesting him to state to Baron Manteuffel, that it is quite impossible for her Majesty's Government now, under any circumstances or conditions whatever, to recommend the adoption of the Vienna note to the Porte.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 132.

[1] This allusion to the withdrawal of the troops before winter seems to

grand council, and, contrary to the advice of England and France, determined on a declaration of war.[1]

Now, observe the course taken by our Government. They agreed to the Vienna note; not fewer than five members of this Cabinet have filled the office of Foreign Secretary, and therefore may be supposed capable of comprehending its meaning: it was a note drawn up by the friends of Turkey, and by arbitrators self-constituted on behalf of Turkey; they urged its acceptance on the Russian Government, and the Russian Government accepted it; there was then a dispute about its precise meaning, and Russia agreed, and even

have had reference to the Vienna, and not the Olmutz note, for we find the Earl of Westmoreland, writing from Vienna, September 14th, 1853, says:—'Count Buol stated that Baron Meyendorff had received a second despatch from Count Nesselrode, expressing the great disappointment felt by the Emperor of Russia at the modification of the original note by the Porte, *and his regret at the consequent delay in the execution of the order which had already been prepared for commencing the evacuation of the Principalities*, and which would have taken place immediately upon the Emperor's receiving the assurance that that note had been adopted by the Porte and would be presented to him. Count Nesselrode declares in this despatch that this measure will be still carried out, if the Emperor should receive a satisfactory assurance from the Sultan *in time for the evacuation to take place during the month of October; later in the year it would not be possible to move the troops*.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 106.

[1] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe writes under date of Constantinople, September 26th, 1853:—'The Turkish Council has given its decision in favour of war. . . . The efforts of the Four Representatives to obtain a pacific solution were fruitless, as well as those which I made this morning, subsequently to the arrival in the course of the night of your despatches forwarded by the *Triton*.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 130.

Again, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, in a despatch to Count Walewski, dated Paris, October 4th, 1853, writes:—'Whilst the Russian army is approaching the Danube, the Porte, *notwithstanding the unanimous efforts of the Representatives of France, of Austria, of Great Britain, and of Prussia, and without being yet acquainted with the new interpretation which Count Nesselrode has given to the note put forth by the Conference*, has persisted for the second time, in its resolution, and declared, that this note, in its original terms, was for ever inadmissible. The Divan has unanimously devolved on the Sultan the duty of declaring war.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 136.

proposed that the arbitrators at Vienna should amend it, by explaining it, and limiting its meaning, so that no question of its intention should henceforth exist. But, the Turks having rejected it, our Government turned round, and declared the Vienna note, their own note, entirely inadmissible, and defended the conduct of the Turks in having rejected it. The Turks declared war, against the advice of the English and French Governments [1]—so, at least, it appears from the

[1] They *insisted* upon war, not only against the advice, but against the almost agonizing entreaties, of the Western Powers, and especially of the English Government. Nothing is more manifest from the latter parts of these Blue Books, than that the Turks felt that they were absolute masters of the situation—that they could safely spurn all efforts at conciliation, because England and France had placed themselves in such a position that, according to the language of Lord Clarendon, 'they must perforce side with Turkey.' Thus Lord Stratford, on the 20th of September, represents himself as '*imploring*' Reshid Pacha, at least to suspend (*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 149) the declaration of war for a short time; and on the 1st October, this same Reshid Pacha, after declaring that the Turkish Government had, in spite of the 'imploring' entreaty of our Ambassador, 'determined upon going to war,' instructs the Turkish Ambassador in London in these cool words :—'*The Imperial Government, under existing circumstances, reckons upon the moral and material support of England and France; and it is to that object that the language which you have to hold at London should be directed.*'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 151. It is clear, also, that Lord Clarendon and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe felt, that they had placed England helplessly in the power of the Turks, and it would be almost ludicrous, but for the painful consequences involved, to see the eager and impotent efforts made by them both, when it was too late, to lay the spirit they had raised at Constantinople.

Lord Clarendon, writing October 24th, 1853, says :—'It is my duty to inform your Excellency, that her Majesty's Government observe with regret that due attention has not been paid by the Turkish Government to the advice tendered by your Excellency, with a sincere regard for the Sultan's own interests, and when, with no other motive than that of preserving peace without detriment to the honour and independence of the Sultan, you desired that the declaration of war and the commencement of hostilities, should be delayed, until all attempts at negotiation should have proved unsuccessful. And what is the explanation? Why, that the French and English had gone too far, and could not retreat, for Lord Cowley in trying to persuade M. Drouyn de Lhuys, that the Olmutz note, which the French Emperor was willing to accept, ought to be rejected, says

blue-books; but the moment war was declared by Turkey, our Government openly applauded it. England, then, was committed to the war. She had promised armed assistance to

very signficantly, "I asked M. Drouyn de Lhuys whether the Emperor had considered . . . *the position in which the two Governments would find themselves, if, with their fleets before Constantinople,* they pressed the acceptance of the Vienna note (*i.e.* with the Olmutz addition) upon the Porte, and the Porte persisted in her refusal, and war was the consequence?" '—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 131. So again, Lord Stratford, writing on November 17th, 1853, after telling Lord Clarendon, that 'a new proposition' presented by himself and the French Ambassador to the Porte, had no chance of acceptance, 'even in a modified shape,' adds:—'I have hitherto exerted my almost solitary efforts in favour of peace under every conceivable disadvantage, including *even that which results in Turkish estimation, from the presence of the allied squadrons in these waters.*'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 271. Writing later on the same day, he says:—'Your Lordship may be assured that I omitted nothing which my instructions, my recollections, or my reflection could suggest, in order to make an impression on his (Reshid Pacha's) mind. *I lament to say that all my efforts were unavailing.* . . . I did, however, the only thing which remained for me to do at the moment. *I took my leave with evident marks of disappointment and dissatisfaction, expressing in strong terms my apprehension, that the Pacha would one day have reason to look back with painful regret on the issue of our interview.*'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 281.

Lord Stratford next tries the Sultan himself, in presenting to him 'Vice-Admiral Dundas and the officers under his command.' The result he describes in the following language:—'After the officers had retired, I saw the Sultan in private, and availed myself of the opportunity . . . to press the arguments I had already employed in favour of peace. Whatever impression I may have made on his Majesty's mind—and his manner encouraged some hope in that respect, especially on the score of humanity, and of the approach of winter—*his language was in complete accordance with that of his minister.*'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 288. And when at length the importunities and reproaches of the Western Powers extorted from the Porte a reluctant promise to suspend the commencement of hostilities, for a few days, that promise was broken. Lord Clarendon writing to Lord Stratford, November 8th, 1853, says:—'Her Majesty's Government entirely approve the proceedings adopted by your Excellency, as reported in your despatch of the 21st ultimo, for preventing the commencement of hostilities, and *they much regret that the promise you obtained to that effect should not have been acted upon.* Her Majesty's Government are anxious to receive the explanation upon this subject, which your Excellency has doubtless demanded from the Porte.'—*Blue Book*, part ii. p. 219.

Turkey—a country without government,[1] and whose administration was at the mercy of contending factions; and incapable of fixing a policy for herself, she allowed herself to be dragged

[1] Lord Clarendon, in his letter of instructions to Lord Stratford, when returning to Constantinople, says :—'*The accumulated grievances of foreign nations, which the Porte is unable or unwilling to redress, the mal-administration of its own affairs, and the increasing weakness of the executive power in Turkey*, have caused the allies of the Porte latterly to assume a tone alike novel and alarming, and which, if persevered in, may lead to a general revolt among the Christian subjects of the Porte, and prove fatal to the independence and integrity of the empire. . . .

'Your Excellency's long residence at the Porte, and intimate knowledge of the affairs of Turkey, will enable you to point out those reforms and improvements which the Sultan, under his present difficulties, may have the means of carrying into effect, and in what manner the Porte may best establish a system of administration calculated to afford reasonable security for the development of its commercial measures and the maintenance of its independence, *recognized by the great Christian Powers on presumption of its proving a reality*, and a stable bond of peace in their respective relations with the Porte, and generally through the Levant. *Nor will you disguise from the Sultan and his Ministers that perseverance in their present course must end in alienating the sympathies of the British nation, and making it impossible for Her Majesty's Government to shelter them from the impending danger, or to overlook the exigencies of Christendom exposed to the natural consequences of their unwise policy and reckless mal-administration.*' —*Blue Book*, part i. pp. 81, 82.

Lord Stratford writing to M. E. Pisani, from Therapia, June 22nd, 1853, says :—'You will communicate to Reshid Pacha the several extracts of consular reports from Scutari, Monastir, and Prevesa, annexed to this instruction. You will observe that *they relate in part to those acts of disorder, injustice, and corruption, sometimes of a very atrocious kind, which I have frequently brought by your means to the knowledge of the Ottoman Porte.* It is with extreme disappointment and pain, that I observe the continuance of evils which affect so deeply the welfare of the empire, and which assume a deeper character of importance in the present critical state of the Porte's relations with Russia.'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 383.

Again, on July 4th, he writes :—'*I have frequently had occasion of late, and indeed for some years back, to bring to the knowledge of the Porte, such atrocious instances of cruelty, rapine, and murder, as I have found, with extreme concern, in the Consular reports, exhibiting generally the disturbed and misgoverned condition of Roumelia, and calling loudly for redress from the Imperial Government. The character of these disorderly and brutal*

on by the current of events at Constantinople. She 'drifted,' as Lord Clarendon said, exactly describing his own position, into the war, apparently without rudder and without compass.

The whole policy of our Government in this matter is marked with an imbecility perhaps without example. I will not say they intended a war from the first, though there are not wanting many evidences that war was the object of at least a section of the Cabinet. A distinguished member of the House of Commons said to a friend of mine, immediately after the accession of the present Government to office, 'You have a war ministry, and you will have a war.' But I leave this question to point out the disgraceful feebleness of the Cabinet, if I am to absolve them from the guilt of having sought occasion for war. They promised the Turk armed assistance on conditions, or without conditions. They, in concert with France, Austria, and Prussia, took the original dispute out of the hands of Russia and Turkey, and formed themselves into a court of arbitration in the interests of Turkey; they made an award, which they declared to be safe and honourable for both parties; this award was accepted by Russia and rejected by Turkey; and they then turned round upon their own award, declared it to be 'totally inadmissible,' and made war upon the very country whose Government, at their suggestion and urgent recommendation, had frankly accepted it. At this moment England is engaged in a

outrages may be said with truth, to be in general, that of Mussulman fanaticism, excited by cupidity and hatred against the Sultan's Christian subjects. . . . The more pressing and obvious wants are these; the correction, by means of explanation and control, of that fanatical and licentious spirit which now influences the Mussulman population; some special means for the protection of the loyal and peaceably disposed, whether Mussulman or Rayah, an efficient responsibility on the part of the local governors and magistrates towards the Supreme Government; a more regular and judicious exercise of authority in the collection of supplies, and the direction of persons acting in concert with the army; relief for the labouring and rural classes, etc.'—*Blue Book*, part i. pp. 383, 384. That is, in other words, 'the pressing and obvious wants,' included almost everything necessary to constitute an organized government.

murderous warfare with Russia, although the Russian Government accepted her own terms of peace, and has been willing to accept them in the sense of England's own interpretation of them ever since they were offered; and at the same time England is allied with Turkey, whose Government rejected the award of England, and who entered into the war in opposition to the advice of England. Surely, when the Vienna note was accepted by Russia, the Turks should have been prevented from going to war, or should have been allowed to go to war at their own risk.

I have said nothing here of the fact that all these troubles have sprung out of the demands made by France upon the Turkish Government, and urged in language more insulting than any which has been shown to have been used by Prince Menschikoff.[1] I have said nothing of the diplomatic war which has been raging for many years past in Constantinople, and in which England has been behind no other power in attempting to subject the Porte to foreign influences.[2] I have

[1] Colonel Rose, writing to the Earl of Malmesbury, November 20th, 1852, says:—'M. de Lavelette (the French Ambassador at Constantinople) has induced the Porte to address to him a note, which nullifies the *status quo* established by the Firman to the Greeks, and states that nothing can be done by the Porte affecting the treaty of 1740, without the consent of France. The French Government have expressed their approbation of this note.' He is represented as 'announcing the extreme measures he would take should the Porte leave any engagements to him unfulfilled.' 'He has,' it is added, 'more than once, talked of the appearance in that case, of a French fleet off Jaffa; and once he alluded to a French occupation of Jerusalem, when, he said, we shall have all the sanctuaries!'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 49.

Lord John Russell, in a despatch to Lord Cowley, dated Foreign Office, January 28th, 1853, says:—'But her Majesty's Government cannot avoid perceiving that the Ambassador of France at Constantinople was the first to distrust the *status quo* in which the matter rested, and if report is to be believed, the French Ambassador was the first to speak of having recourse to force, and to threaten the intervention of a French fleet, to enforce the demands of his country.'—*Blue Book*, part i. p. 67.

[2] Many illustrations of this might be given, but we restrict ourselves to one, which seems to be an almost exact counterpart of that for which Russia is now so vehemently condemned. In 1841, our own Government

said nothing of the abundant evidences there is that we are not only at war with Russia, but with all the Christian population of the Turkish empire, and that we are building up our

united with the King of Prussia, in making certain demands of the Porte on behalf of the Protestants in Turkey. Lord Palmerston on July 26th, 1841, thus wrote to Lord Ponsonby, then our Ambassador at Constantinople :—'I have to acquaint your Excellency, that the Government of her Majesty adopts with great earnestness the plan proposed by the King of Prussia, as detailed in the enclosed paper, for affording to European Protestants encouragement to settle and purchase land in the Turkish dominions, and for securing to Protestants, *whether native subjects of the Porte* or foreigners who have settled in Turkey, securities, and protection *similar to those which Christians of other denominations enjoy*'—(the very same thing that the Czar asked for the Greeks). The first instalment of this demand was for permission to build a protestant church at Jerusalem. This was refused by the Ottoman Court. Lord Ponsonby writes to Lord Aberdeen thus : 'I had a final interview with Rifaat Pasha this day, at which I renewed all the arguments in support of the demand for permission to build a church at Jerusalem. The Pasha will send me an official note on the 9th, containing his reply to what I have said on the subject, and *containing the refusal of the demand.* The Ottoman ministers are not personally averse to what has been asked, but they are overruled by the fears of the Ulemas in the council, having Sheik Al Islam at their head. I spoke strongly to Rifaat and pointed out the risk the Porte incurred of giving offence to her Majesty's Government, *by denying to them that which they had granted to others*, and told him that he was in error when he denied our right ; and I claimed it, not only on the ground set forth in my official note, but specifically on the right of the most ancient of our customs. I maintained that we have a right, founded on treaty, *that all the privileges, of every kind, granted to the French, should be considered as belonging equally to us*, and that to refuse them would possibly be considered an insult. His Excellency Rifaat Pasha said it was no insult. I replied, that, *unfortunately, it did not depend on the opinion of his Excellency, and that her Majesty's Government might think it an insult.*' In a letter afterwards addressed by Lord Ponsonby to Rifaat Pasha, he clenches the matter with the following very significant threat :—'IT REMAINS FOR YOUR EXCELLENCY TO CONSIDER WHAT MAY BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A VIOLATION BY THE SUBLIME PORTE OF ITS TREATIES WITH GREAT BRITAIN.'—*Blue Book*, Correspondence respecting the Condition of Protestants in Turkey, 1841–51, pp. 5-8.

The Porte yielded, of course ; but if it had not, does any man doubt that England would have made some naval demonstration by way of 'material guarantee' for the accomplishment of her wish ?

Eastern Policy on a false foundation—namely, on the perpetual maintenance of the most immoral and filthy of all despotisms over one of the fairest portions of the earth which it has desolated, and over a population it has degraded but has not been able to destroy. I have said nothing of the wretched delusion that we are fighting for civilization in supporting the Turk against the Russian and against the subject Christian population of Turkey. I have said nothing about our pretended sacrifices for freedom in this war, in which one great and now dominant ally is a monarch who, last in Europe, struck down a free constitution, and dispersed by military violence a national Representative Assembly.

My doctrine would have been non-intervention in this case. The danger of the Russian power was a phantom;[1] the necessity of permanently upholding the Mahometan rule in Europe is an absurdity. Our love for civilization, when we subject the Greeks and Christians to the Turks, is a sham; and our sacrifices for freedom, when working out the behests of the Emperor of the French and coaxing Austria to help us, is a pitiful imposture. The evils of non-intervention were remote and vague, and could neither be weighed nor described in any accurate terms. The good we can judge something of already, by estimating the cost of a contrary policy. And what is that cost? War in the north and south of Europe, threatening to involve every country of Europe. Many, perhaps fifty, millions sterling, in the course of expenditure by this country alone, to be raised from the taxes of a people whose extrication from ignorance and poverty can only be hoped for from the continuance of peace. The disturbance of trade throughout the world, the derangement of monetary affairs, and difficulties and ruin to thousands of families. Another year of high prices of food, notwithstanding a full

[1] 'There never has been a great State whose power for external aggression has been more overrated than Russia. She may be impregnable within her own boundaries, BUT SHE IS NEARLY POWERLESS FOR ANY PURPOSE OF OFFENCE.'—*Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons last session.*

harvest in England, chiefly because war interferes with imports, and we have declared our principal foreign food growers to be our enemies.[1] The loss of human life to an enormous extent. Many thousands of our own countrymen have already perished of pestilence and in the field; and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of English families will be plunged into sorrow, as a part of the penalty to be paid for the folly of the nation and its rulers.

When the time comes for the 'inquisition for blood,' who shall answer for these things? You have read the tidings from the Crimea; you have, perhaps, shuddered at the slaughter; you remember the terrific picture—I speak not of the battle, and the charge, and the tumultuous excitement of the conflict, but of the field after the battle—Russians in their frenzy or their terror, shooting Englishmen who would have offered them water to quench their agony of thirst; Englishmen, in crowds, rifling the pockets of the men they had slain or wounded, taking their few shillings or roubles, and discovering among the plunder of the stiffening corpses images of the 'Virgin and the Child.' You have read this, and your imagination has followed the fearful details. This is war—every crime which human nature can commit or imagine, every horror it can perpetrate or suffer; and this it is which our Christian Government recklessly plunges into, and which

[1] 'The people—the many-handed, many-mouthed people—will apparently have to pay this same year 37 per cent. more for their bread than they did last year. Perhaps the most striking way of putting it, is to remind the working classes that every man, woman, and child is supposed to consume, one with another, a quarter of wheat a year; so that the head of a family of five persons will find that his year's bread will cost £7 10*s*. more than last year. . . . There is no deficiency which the Black Sea could not easily supply. But there is the difficulty. Wheat that would fetch 70*s*. or 80*s*. here, is only worth 20*s*. in ports affected by our blockade. The operations of war are of first necessity; and, hard as it may seem to deprive the poor corn grower of his price, unreasonable as it may seem to deprive the British workman of cheap bread, still, if the blockade is necessary for the reduction of the foe, there is no help for it.'—*Times*.

so many of our countrymen at this moment think it patriotic to applaud! You must excuse me if I cannot go with you. I will have no part in this terrible crime. My hands shall be unstained with the blood which is being shed. The necessity of maintaining themselves in office may influence an administration; delusions may mislead a people; *Vattel* may afford you a law and a defence; but no respect for men who form a Government, no regard I have for 'going with the stream,' and no fear of being deemed wanting in patriotism, shall influence me in favour of a policy which, in my conscience, I believe to be as criminal before God as it is destructive of the true interest of my country.

I have only to ask you to forgive me for writing so long a letter. You have forced it from me, and I would not have written it did I not so much appreciate your sincerity and your good intentions towards me.

Believe me to be, very sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

ABSALOM WATKIN, Esq., Manchester.

IV.—THE FRENCH TREATY AND ARMAMENTS.

The speech here reproduced with abbreviations is exceedingly important and interesting at the present time; first because it contains Cobden's own account of the famous treaty of commerce with France which he negotiated in 1860, and second because of the passage (so often misrepresented) in which Cobden declares his willingness to vote in a certain emergency 100 millions for the Navy. The speech was delivered to his constituents at Rochdale on June 26th, 1861.

I APPEAR here to-night under rather peculiar circumstances; for I have no account to give of my stewardship in Parliament, having been occupied for nearly eighteen months abroad, partly in prosecuting a public duty, and partly in quest of health. I have been engaged in arranging a commercial treaty with France. I have been, as you are aware, honoured with the confidence of our Sovereign, and, aided by colleagues whose services in the matter I would not for a moment appropriate to myself, I have been endeavouring to make such arrangements as shall lead two great countries, peculiarly designed by Providence to confer mutual benefits upon each other, but who, owing to the folly and perhaps wickedness of man, have been for centuries rather seeking to injure and destroy each other, to enter upon new relations. I have been seeking to form arrangements by which these two countries shall be united together in mutual bonds of dependence, and, I hope, of future peace.

It has been truly said by your mayor, that France has been hitherto as a nation attached to those principles of commercial

restriction which we in England have but lately released ourselves from, but which have cost us thirty years of pretty continuous labour, and the services of three or four most eminent statesmen, in order to bring us to our present state of comparative freedom of commerce. The French, on the contrary, have taken hardly a single step in this direction; and it was left for the present Emperor—and he alone had the power—to accomplish that object, and to his Minister of Commerce, who for the last eighteen months has scarcely given himself twenty-four hours of leisure—it was left for them to accomplish in France, in the course of a couple of years, what has taken us in England at least thirty years to effect. I mention this, because I wish—and I have a reason for it, which I will state in a moment—I wish it to be borne in mind what has been the magnitude of the task which the French Government has had to accomplish on this occasion. They had to confront powerful influences which were at the moment entirely unbroken, and they had to attack the whole body of monopoly in France; whereas, if you recollect, in this country our statesmen began by sapping and mining, and by throwing over the smaller interests, in order that they might form a coalition of them against the greater monopolies. Everything has had to be done in France during the last eighteen months. Much remains to be done, I hope much will be accomplished in a short time. I wish you to understand distinctly the magnitude of the task which the French Government has had to accomplish, because thereupon hangs a tale and an argument upon which I shall have a word to say in a moment. There is a peculiarity in the condition of French industry which gives the fair prospect of a reasonable anticipation of a mutual and beneficial intercourse between these two countries. It is a very singular fact that in France, which by its social organizations and by its political maxims, is perhaps one of the most democratic nations in the world, the manufacturing population is mainly employed in the manufacture of articles

Economic comparison of France and England.

of great luxury and taste, adapted almost exclusively for the consumption of the aristocratic and the rich, whereas England, on the contrary, the most aristocratic people in the world, is almost wholly employed in the manufacture of those articles which conduce to the comfort and the benefit of the great masses of the community. You have here, therefore, two peoples, who, by their distinct geniuses, are admirably suited for a mutual exchange of the products of their industry, and I argue very much, as your mayor has intimated, in favour of the great advantages which the masses of the French people will derive from the Treaty which has been lately arranged with that country.

The French people—I am speaking of the working people—are, in comparison with the English people, a badly clothed population. Any one who has travelled in the winter-time from Calais to Dover cannot fail to have observed the contrast between those blue round frocks which the Frenchmen wear, and the more comfortable, because warmer, woollen and worsted garments which the English workmen at that season of the year possess. It reminds me—the condition of the French population in their clothing now—somewhat of the condition in which this population of England was placed, with regard to food, five-and-twenty years ago, before the corn laws were touched. At that time, our population was a badly fed people—living, too many of them, upon roots; there were some six or eight million quarters less of corn consumed than ought to have been consumed in this country, and than has been annually consumed since the people were permitted to obtain it.

Just as free trade has enabled this people to be better fed, so will it enable the French population to buy better clothing, and by precisely the same process by which we have arrived at this result in England; partly because there will be a considerable importation into France of your plain and coarse manufactures, and partly because of the stimulus that will be given to the manufactures of the French themselves—

just as your increased supply of corn in this country has come, partly from the importation of the produce of foreign countries, and partly from the important advantages which competition has afforded to your own agriculturists. And we, on our side, will obtain, and have obtained, great benefits from this change. The change on our side is our merit; the change on the other side is the merit of the French Government. What, I confess, as an Englishman, I have been led in this important duty most to consider, is how this matter has benefited you, not by what it will allow you to export, but by what it will allow you to import. This is the way by which I seek to benefit a population, by allowing more of the good things to come in from abroad.

The benefit of imports.

Upon the imports are based the late measures of our Government; and I give the credit for the putting this great final coping-stone upon the edifice of Free Trade—I mean so far as the abolition of all protective duties goes—I give the merit to the present Government, and their great Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gladstone). They have abolished the last remaining protective duties in our tariff. Now, mark what the advantage of this will be to us as a mercantile people—an advantage which has not been sufficiently appreciated, I venture to observe. By removing every duty upon all articles of foreign manufacture, we have made England a free port for manufactured goods, just as we had made it a free port for corn and for raw materials. The consequence is, that all articles of foreign manufacture may be brought to England without let or hindrance. We find a large consumption for them here; and foreigners and colonists coming from Australia, and Canada, and America, may find in our warehouses, not merely all our produce which they want, but Swiss, and German, and French produce, which they may buy here without visiting the Continent to purchase there. This, I consider, is to us, as a mercantile people, an immense advantage, which will be, by-and-by, fully appreciated, the

The coping-stone of Free Trade.

importance of which, I think, has not yet been altogether anticipated; but, besides this, we are going to import commodities from France which have been hitherto prohibited, and which will not only be to their advantage, but to ours.

Take, for instance, the article of wine. We all know that for a century or more, owing to an absurd treaty which was made with Portugal, this country put a prohibitive duty upon French wines, and the consequence has been that the taste of this country has been perverted, and that which is the best article of its kind in the world has been almost a stranger in this land.

Abolition of preferential duties on wine.

Well, besides the preferential duty which has included French wines, we have laid on such an enormous amount of duty that nothing but wines of the very strongest character, the effect of which could be suddenly felt in the head, were ever thought worth purchasing. When a man had to pay 6*d.* or 9*d.* for a glass of wine containing a few thimblefuls, he wanted something which would affect his head for his money; he would not buy the fine, natural, and comparatively weak wines of France, though every other country in the world but England has regarded French wines as the best wines in the world. The English taste has been adulterated, and our people, or those who could afford it, have preferred the narcotic and inflammatory mixture which is called port, or even sherry. A friend of mine lately had the curiosity to look into our national ballads, with the view of finding out and making a collection of drinking songs. He told me he found that all the songs were in honour of French wines—champagne, burgundy, bordeaux—and they were all old songs, written at the time when our ancestors used and preferred French wine; and that since they were not allowed to obtain those wines, songs in favour of wine have ceased. He drew this conclusion:—That when the people drank French wines they became merry and sang; but when they took to port and sherry it made them stupid, and they went to sleep.

I don't know that I should like to go so far as a lamented

friend of mine, a former mayor of Bordeaux, who happened to be travelling in England, and paid us a visit in Manchester to a dinner; and when his health had been drunk, he said—'Gentlemen, when I travel I have but one test of civilization everywhere. I ask, Do the people consume claret?' That is, the wine of Bordeaux. I don't go quite so far as that, but I do say, in whatever point of view you regard it, whether it is as a beneficial exchange with France, enabling you to exchange the products of your industry with the greatest and richest people on the Continent, whether it be in the interests of temperance, or whether it be in the interests of health, it is desirable that the taste of England should have at least the opportunity of going back to that natural channel which our forefathers followed when they had, as we now have, access to French wines at a moderate duty, or at the same duty as on other wines. I am not so sanguine as to expect that a great trade is to grow up between France and England, suddenly, to-morrow, or next year. It will require time; but the door has been opened honestly, with all sincerity; and I have no doubt, after we have had a sufficient time to correct those errors into which our forefathers fell, that this work, like every other in which we have been engaged where restrictions have been removed, will be found favourable to the best interests of this country and of France.

Now, I confess that the work on which I have been engaged would have but small interest for me, if it had not conduced to something different and higher than the mere increase of the beverage of the people of this country. The object which I have sought, and which those who know me will know right well, has been not merely to promote the physical well-being of these two peoples—though that in itself is an object worthy of all care—but my aim and hope have been to promote such a change as shall lead to a better moral and political tone between the nations.

Moral and political purposes of the treaty.

And this brings me to the point to which I said I would

refer. Your worthy mayor has alluded to the immense preparations now making by the Governments of these two countries for warlike operations. Those preparations, so far as the navies of the two countries are concerned, are undoubtedly —nay, avowedly—with the view to mutual attack or defence from those two countries alone. Well, now, we are not ignorant of the fact that the French Government and the French Emperor have been made responsible for this increase in our naval armaments. It is upon that point I want to say a word or two to you as my constituents, and I address myself to this subject with you, because it is one that is peculiarly germane to my first meeting with this constituency after a meeting which you held some eighteen months ago, in which you refused to establish a rifle corps in this town. At the time when that meeting was held I was in Paris, and read the proceedings with considerable interest. It was the only meeting I saw, during a peculiar fervour and violence of agitation in this country, at which such a resolution was arrived at; and, without passing judgment upon the question of volunteers in general—upon which I reserve myself, for I don't know whether I shall have time to say anything on the subject—all I wish to say is this, that, as far as my experience goes, and it has not been small, as you may suppose, in France, as far as the decision of this town was come to on the ground that there was no danger from France which warranted such a preparation, I come here to tell you, in my judgment, you acted with perfect propriety.

Now, I have spoken of the difficulties and the obstacles which the French Government had to encounter in the work in which they had been engaged for the last eighteen months —the total subversion of their commercial system. I ask you, as I ask every reasonable man, is there no presumptive evidence calculated to make you pause before you believe as probable or true what certain admirals —one of them, I am sorry to say, now no more—say as to the French Government and the French meditating to attack

The naval panic.

or invade this country, when you find that Government engaged in this most difficult task, the subversion of their commercial system, by throwing open the markets of that country to the manufactures of England, and opening the markets of England to the productions of France? I say, is there not something in this fact to make you pause before you believe on the mere *ipse dixit* of some not over-wise admiral, who has never given one fact to prove what he says, that it is the design of the French emperor to come and invade your shores without cause of quarrel or without grievance assigned? But I don't ask you to rely upon probabilities of things in this matter. I speak to you of facts—facts which have come within my own knowledge—facts which I, perhaps, better than any man in the world, have had the opportunity of knowing and investigating.

It is alleged that the French have been for some time making formidable preparations in their naval armaments. Well, the first question I ask with regard to that is—What has been the proportion of money spent in France upon their naval armaments, and what has been the proportion spent in England for a similar purpose? There has been always between England and France, by a sort of tacit agreement, I may call it, a certain proportion or relation in the amounts expended on their respective armaments. If you take the navies of the two countries for the last century, you will find that, when in a normal state of peace, the French have had a navy little more than half the size of that of England. If you take the expenditure you will find that the French naval administration has, during all that period, by a sort of tacit arrangement—as I have said—spent rather more than the half of what England has spent upon her navy. Well, then, I will take the ten years that preceded 1858 inclusive. I find that the expenditure of the French has been rather more than the half of what England has spent. I have taken the expenditure up to 1858 only for this reason—that if you take the French estimates you

Comparison of naval expenditure in France and in England.

will not arrive at the actual expenditure. I admit that would not be a fair criterion of the amount of money spent in this manner; because they bring forward the estimates for the year, and afterwards there are supplementary votes, which increase the amount. But if you wait for two years, until the definitive balances and records of the French finances have passed through their audit offices, and have been published in what is called *Les Règlements Définitifs du Budget*, then you have as reliable an account as any in the world. I have heard of no political party—and you know that in France party feeling is as bitter, or even more bitter, than in this country—I have never heard any foreigner even, but who would admit, without scruple or observation, that when these definitive budgets are published, you have a creditable and reliable account of their expenditure. I have waited, and I see that down to the last accounts, published up to the year 1858, the French, for ten years previously—during the whole of the reign of this Emperor, and before his accession—have expended little more than half of what has been expended in England.

Well, but in England we have ships of war 20 per cent. cheaper than in France; we have steam-engines 30 per cent. cheaper; we have coals 40 per cent., and we have stores 20 or 30 per cent. cheaper. How is it, then, I ask, if France has expended little more than half what we have in these ten years—how is it, that in the year 1859 you suddenly hear, as though it were an explosion, that France is coming to invade us, and has made undue preparations in her naval armaments; and that we must not be content with nearly doubling our expenditure, and with a large expenditure on our standing forces, but must call upon the people of this country to arm and enrol themselves as volunteers? There must be a reason for this state of things. I speak always with too much respect for the great masses of my countrymen, even when I am confronting what I believe to be their delusions, to think of passing over this subject without offering the best explanation

I can to satisfy and assure the public mind upon this question. I believe I can answer the question by stating that there may be facts connected with our navy which will give some colour to these outcries of alarm. The facts are these: The affairs of our Admiralty are most deplorably mismanaged. That will not be denied by any one now that is acquainted with what is going on at head-quarters. We had a commission sitting last year, under the Queen's sign manual, to inquire into the management of our dockyards. Men of business placed upon that Commission made a tour of the dockyards and arsenals. They examined them. And what do you think was their report? The substance of it is in a dozen lines, and I will read them to you:—

Deplorable mismanagement of the British navy.

'The Royal Commission appointed last year reports that the control and management of the dockyards are inefficient from the following causes:—First, from the inefficiency of the constitution of the Board of Admiralty; secondly, from the defective organization of the subordinate departments; thirdly from the want of a well-defined responsibility; fourthly, from the absence of any means, both now, and in times past, of effectually checking expenditure from a want of accurate accounts.

Now mark; just endeavour as men of business to carry with the full meaning of this verdict by supposing it to apply to a private house of business. First, the constitution of the Board of Admiralty is defective, that is, of the body, the head of the governing body—that means, the masters—don't know their business, and are not properly appointed. Then we have the defective organization of the subordinate departments—that means, the foremen don't know their business. Then the want of clear and well-defined accounts—that means, that the masters, or those who call themselves masters, if you go and ask them why such a thing is not done, they will tell you that they are not responsible. And then, the fourth defect is that they don't keep reliable accounts, and therefore they don't know how the concern is carried on.

That is the judgment passed upon our Admiralty by a

Commission under the Queen's sign manual issued last year; but at the present moment there is a Committee sitting in the House of Commons, inquiring again into the affairs of the Admiralty, examining the same witnesses and others, and trying to find out the evils of this mal-administration. Well, I have said that the French Government during the ten years ending with 1858, spent a little more than one-half what we spent upon their navy. Then comes the question, what has become of all this money? How have these people managed to waste the enormous sums they have taken and wrung from the pockets of the tax-oppressed people? I will give you one little item from my honourable friend, who is now the Secretary of the Admiralty, Lord Clarence Paget. Speaking in the spring of 1859—I could give you the exact date—he attacked those who were then in office; and he came into office a few months afterwards in the same capacity. Now, he stated in Parliament, that he had gone carefully over the accounts for the eleven years previous to 1859, and he found five millions sterling voted for the construction of ships of war which could not be accounted for. Now don't let me be misunderstood. Neither Lord Clarence Paget nor myself mean to imply that this money is stolen. The persons we criticise are honourable men as far as personal honour goes. I mean that they are certainly not the men to put the money into their own pockets. I will account for it in other ways, and I am here to account for it to you. The money has been wasted by making things which were useless. When the heads are irresponsible, when the foremen are ignorant, and when there are no accounts that can be relied upon, you may be satisfied how the business must be carried on. I will give you an instance of it, and it will explain this matter. It will explain the whole mystery of what we have in hand. About the year 1850 it was seen and admitted by the naval authorities in both countries that, in consequence of the application of steam for the propelling of ships, the old sailing vessels of the line could no longer be relied upon in case of war. Both France and

England at that time came to the conclusion that in future line-of-battle ships must have screw propellers put in them. What was the course pursued by France? France has one Minister of Marine—not a Board, like ours, consisting of gentlemen upon whom it would puzzle even a detective police officer to fix any responsibility. The Emperor and the Minister of Marine are in concert; and they say, as wooden sailing line-of-battle ships will be useless in future, we must cease building them; and they have ceased building them. In England, we went on building line-of-battle ships for sails, and have been building them ever since. The French took their old vessels—their existing vessels—and put screw steam-engines into them, and adapted them for the purposes of war. In England, we went on building and converting, and managing to build new vessels as fast as we converted the old ones; and the consequence is that France, only having to buy steam-engines to put into her wooden vessels (whilst we were building vessels and buying steam-engines), has got her work done in less time, and at less expense, than we have. When it came in view almost immediately afterwards that, in consequence of this proceeding, the French appeared to have at one moment—according to the statement of one of our Admiralty—nearly as many line-of-battle ships with screws as we had, we heard a cry that the French wanted to steal a march upon us, because she had nearly as many steam line-of-battle vessels as we. We never took stock of our line-of-battle steam and sailing vessels combined. If we had, we should have found that we had at that time as many more line-of-battle ships as we had in 1850. That is one of the ways in which this vast sum of money has been uselessly spent.

I will now come to five years later. During the war in the Crimea, it was found that these iron-cased vessels for gun-boats served the purpose admirably of protecting ships of war from those shells and combustible missiles which were the latest inventions for the purposes of war. Immediately that was discovered, the Emperor orders two frigates to be

built and covered with iron. We knew what was going on, and the English Admiralty reported upon it. They were in no great hurry in constructing the *Gloire*. The keel of that vessel was laid down in the summer of 1858, and she was not completed with her armour on till the autumn of 1860. What does our Admiralty do in the mean time? We had one Admiralty after another; and as they succeed each other, you see them go down to Shoeburyness or Portsmouth for the purpose of trying experiments—first inviting Mr. Whitworth to see if he could manufacture a gun sufficiently powerful to send a rifled solid bullet through these iron plates; and at another time calling on Sir William Armstrong to do the same. In this way they continue to amuse themselves. In the mean time, the Minister of Marine and the Emperor said, 'What we want is something to protect us against the hollow shells which fall very much like hail on our wooden ships.' It is against these detonating shells that we wish to protect ourselves, and the French Government went on to complete these two vessels of war with iron armour. But there was no reason why these iron vessels should have been launched before ours. We voted the money; we have more iron, and more workmen capable of constructing such vessels, if the Admiralty had chosen to employ them. But there is no responsibility, no one who knows his business, and nothing was done. Then, because the French had their iron ship completed sooner than ours, a cry was raised that the Emperor was coming to invade us.

Now, I have examined this question, and, having taken the pains to inform myself upon it, I have no hesitation in saying that the idea of the French Government ever contemplating rivalling us in our naval force, still less of invading us—I say it from my conscience—I believe is as great a hoax and delusion upon this generation as anything we read of in history since the time of Titus Oates, and indeed, as bad as anything Titus Oates ever said. I have given you the judgment of this Royal Commission upon the Admiralty. Now I will read a few words uttered by Mr. Gladstone in the House

of Commons, last year, upon the nature—upon the character—of our administration generally of public works—

'He had no hesitation in saying that these and other circumstances of a like kind were entirely owing to the lamentable and deplorable state of our whole arrangements with regard to the management of our public works. Vacillation, uncertainty, costliness, extravagance, and all the conflicting vices that could be enumerated were united in our present system. There was a total want of authority to direct and guide when anything was to be done; they had to go from department to department, from the House of Commons to a Committee, from a Committee to a Commission, and from a Commission to a Committee again; so that years passed away, the public were disappointed, and the money of the country was wasted. He believed that such were the evils of the system, that nothing short of a revolutionary reform would ever be sufficient to rectify it.'

Mr. Gladstone was then speaking with reference to the administration of the Public Works in connection with the building of the British Museum. But the greatest of your national manufactures is the navy. Your dockyards are the great Government manufactories; it is there, with their ships and machinery, that the largest amount of your money is spent, and the greatest waste takes place. And, bad as is the Board of Public Works, I believe it is the unanimous opinion of public men of all parties, except the half-dozen who have been in the Admiralty, or the half-dozen now in it, that of all the public departments, that which is the worst managed, the most irresponsible, and where the greatest waste prevails, is the Admiralty.

Now, I do not think it out of place or out of time to talk to you upon this subject—upon this fallacy, with reference to the designs and doings of the French Government and of the French Emperor in particular; for upon that fallacy is based a claim upon the pockets which must be counted by millions sterling per annum. But I speak to you also in the character of your representative, who was placed in a responsible and delicate

The French emperor and the English people.

position with reference to this very question. I was in Paris at the time that all these meetings were convoked to form these rifle corps. I was there with the known object of endeavouring to promote a treaty of commerce between the two countries. I was first in the midst of the negotiations for the basis of the treaty, when there was the greatest excitement, and the greatest anxiety, and the greatest agitation in this country, for the purpose of getting up public demonstrations in favour of the rifle corps, avowedly to protect this country against France. The language held in this country—I can hardly trust myself to characterize it. I remember an account of a meeting in Somersetshire—I don't know that it could have taken place in a more appropriate county—there was a farmer speaking upon this subject, and somebody cried out to him—he was speaking of invasion by the French Emperor —'Suppose they come, what will you charge them for your corn?' And his answer was, 'They shall pay for it with their blood!' This was the language, and it is only a sample. It was going on through the country at a time when, I repeat it, not one act had ever been done by the French Government to warrant the supposition of any hostile feeling being meditated towards us, and at the very time when the French Government was about to enter upon a complete revolution in their commercial policy; which, if the French Emperor had such a design as to make an attack upon the country, would have convicted him of the most absolute folly—I was going to say madness—because at the same time that he was disturbing the commercial interests, and setting the ironmasters, the cotton-spinners, and all the great capitalists against him, he was said to be meditating just such an attack upon this country as would have required the support of those very interests to gain his ends. Nay, more, looking at him as an intelligent being—and that is his great characteristic, for he is a remarkably intelligent man—looking at him as an intelligent man, what must we say of his conduct in proposing at the same time to adopt a policy which would knit the two countries in

the bonds of commercial dependence in such a way that it would have been difficult to have caused a rupture between them—for war tears asunder most of those sensitive fibres which constitute the body politic when it rends these mutual ties of commercial intercourse—what shall we say of a man who, though arming a few ships, was suspected of contemplating a piratical attack on this country? But supposing that might have been possible; I tell you candidly, that before I took a step in reference to this treaty, I satisfied myself upon these facts, which I am now narrating; and I tell you more, and I would tell to the French Government as I now tell to you, that if I found one fact to justify what was stated here at that time in public meetings—if I found that the French Government had done anything to disturb that relation which has existed pretty nearly for a century in the proportions of the French and English navies—I should have suspected some sinister design on the part of the French Government, and should have considered myself a traitor to my country if I had allowed the Government of that country, on proof of any sinister intentions, to have made use of me to mislead or hoodwink England by leading me to suppose that my instrumentality was being used for the promotion of commercial intercourse, when I had grounds to believe they were entering upon a policy of war.

I have said that down to the year 1858 inclusive we have the finance accounts, showing what has been the expenditure of France compared with our own upon our navy. As we have not the audited accounts for 1859 and 1860—and I am not going to trust to estimates—I will not speak of the expenditure for these two years. But I can give you another proof that during last year, at the very time we were raising this cry of invasion, and charging the French Government with making undue and unprecedented preparations for an invasion of our shores—that we had last year, and during the whole of last year, a larger naval force, in proportion to that of France, than I have ever known in any normal natural time of peace

within the last century. I will not speak of money, but of men. When you take the number of men voted and employed in the navy, you have the clue to all the other expenses of the navy; that is never attempted to be denied by any one who understands anything of these matters. During 1860, the French Government had voted 30,400 men and boys for their navy; and in the same year we had 84,000 men and boys voted for our navy. I will take what I know upon authority, and which will not be disputed by anybody. I will assume that the French navy possessed 34,000 men and boys last year—3600 more than they actually had. Then taking these 34,000 against our 84,000, it is as near as possible two to our five; so that instead of half, or a little more than half, which has been the normal state of things, last year, at the time of all this hubbub, at the time when you were invited to shoulder your muskets to protect your shores, your proportion of armaments by sea was greater than it has been in almost any time of peace that I can find in my researches. I know they tell us that the French have got a number of men in their mercantile marine who are all inscribed on the maritime inscription of France, and that such inscription gives the Government the power to press those men into their service; and you must consider that. Now, I say, take all the able-bodied seamen the French have in their mercantile marine, and add them to the men in the imperial navy, and it will not bring them up to the number we have in our royal navy. I am not one to advocate the reducing of our navy in any degree below that proportion to the French navy which the exigencies of our service require; and, mind what I say, here is just what the French Government would admit as freely as you would. England has four times, at least, the amount of mercantile tonnage to protect at sea that France has, and that surely gives us a legitimate pretension to have a larger navy than France. Besides, this country is an island; we cannot communicate with any part of the world except by sea. France, on the other hand, has a frontier upon land, by

The maintenance of naval superiority.

which she can communicate with the whole world. We have, I think, unfortunately for ourselves, about a hundred times the amount of territory beyond the seas to protect, as colonies and dependencies, that France has. France has also twice or three times as large an army as England has. All these things give us a right to have a navy somewhat in the proportion to the French navy which we find to have existed if we look back over the past century. Nobody has disputed it. I would be the last person who would ever advocate any undue change in this proportion. On the contrary—I have said it in the House of Commons, and I repeat it to you—if the French Government showed a sinister design to increase their navy to an equality with ours; then, after every explanation to prevent such an absurd waste, I should vote 100 millions sterling rather than allow that navy to be increased to a level with ours—because I should say that any attempt of that sort without any legitimate grounds, would argue some sinister designs upon this country.

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V.—THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA

The following extracts are taken from a speech delivered by Bright in the House of Commons, June 30th, 1863, in opposition to Roebuck's motion for recognition of the Southern Confederacy. The speech began with a crushing attack upon Roebuck—'Tear 'em,' as he rejoiced to be called. That part has been omitted as the inconsistencies of Roebuck's violent jingoism are no longer of importance. Roebuck was at this time member for Sheffield.

I NOW come to the proposition which the honourable and learned gentleman has submitted to the House, and which he has already submitted to a meeting of his constituents at Sheffield. At that meeting, on the 27th of May, the honourable and learned gentleman used these words: 'What I have to consider is, what are the interests of England: what is for her interests I believe to be for the interests of the world.' Now, leaving out of consideration the latter part of that statement, if the honourable and learned gentleman will keep to the first part of it, then what we have now to consider in this question is, what is for the interest of England. But the honourable and learned gentleman has put it to-night in almost as offensive a way as he did before at Sheffield, and has said that the United States would not bully the world if they were divided and subdivided; for he went so far as to contemplate division into more than two independent sections. I say that the whole of his case rests upon a miserable jealousy of the United States, or on what I may term a base fear. It is a fear which appears to me just as groundless as any of those panics by which the honourable and learned gentleman has attempted to frighten the country.

Base jealousy of the United States.

There never was a State in the world which was less capable of aggression with regard to Europe than the United States of America. I speak of its government, of its confederation, of the peculiarities of its organization; for the House will agree with me, that nothing is more peculiar than the fact of the great power which the separate States, both of the North and South, exercise upon the policy and course of the country. I will undertake to say, that, unless in a question of overwhelming magnitude, which would be able to unite any people, it would be utterly hopeless to expect that all the States of the American Union would join together to support the central Government in any plan of aggression on England or any other country of Europe.

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I want to show the honourable and learned gentleman that England is not interested in the course he proposes we should take; and when I speak of interests, I mean the commercial interests, the political interests, and the moral interests of the country. And first, with regard to the supply of cotton, in which the noble lord the member for Stamford takes such a prodigious interest. I must explain to the noble lord that I know a little about cotton. I happen to have been engaged in that business—not all my life, for the noble lord has seen me here for twenty years —but my interests have been in it; and at this moment the firm of which I am a member have no less than six mills, which have been at a stand for nearly a year, owing to the impossibility of working under the present conditions of the supply of cotton. I live among a people who live by this trade; and there is no man in England who has a more direct interest in it than I have. Before the war, the supply of cotton was little and costly, and every year it was becoming more costly, for the supply did not keep pace with the demand.

Slavery and the supply of cotton.

The point that I am about to argue is this: I believe that the war which is now raging in America is more likely to

abolish slavery than not, and more likely to abolish it than any other thing that can be proposed in the world. I regret very much that the pride and passion of men are such as to justify me in making this statement. The supply of cotton under slavery must always be insecure. The House felt so in past years; for at my recommendation they appointed a committee, and but for the folly of a foolish Minister they would have appointed a special commission to India at my request. Is there any gentleman in this House who will not agree with me in this—that it would be far better for our great Lancashire industry that our supply of cotton should be grown by free labour than by slave labour?

Before the war, the whole number of negroes engaged in the production of cotton was about one million—that is, about a fourth of the whole of the negroes in the Slave States. The annual increase in the number of negroes growing cotton was about twenty-five thousand—only two and a-half per cent. It was impossible for the Southern States to keep up their growth of sugar, rice, tobacco, and their ordinary slave productions, and at the same time to increase the growth of cotton more than at a rate corresponding with the annual increase of negroes. Therefore you will find that the quantity of cotton grown, taking ten years together, increased only at the rate of about one hundred thousand bales a-year. But that was nothing like the quantity which we required. That supply could not be increased, because the South did not cultivate more than probably one and a-half per cent. of the land which was capable of cultivation for cotton.

The great bulk of the land in the Southern States is uncultivated. Ten thousand square miles are appropriated to the cultivation of cotton; but there are six hundred thousand square miles, or sixty times as much land, which is capable of being cultivated for cotton. It was, however, impossible that the land should be so cultivated, because, although you had climate and sun, you had no labour. The institution of slavery forbade free labour men in the North to come to the

South; and every emigrant that landed in New York from Europe knew that the Slave States were no States for him, and therefore he went North or West. The laws of the United States, the sentiments of Europe and of the world, being against any opening of the slave trade, the planters of the South were shut up, and the annual increase in the supply of cotton could increase only in the same proportion as the annual increase in the number of their negroes.

There is only one other point with regard to that matter which is worth mentioning. The honourable and learned gentleman the member for Sheffield will understand it, although on some points he seems to be peculiarly dark. If a planter in the Southern States wanted to grow one thousand bales of cotton a-year, he would require about two hundred negroes. Taking them at five hundred dollars, or one hundred pounds each, which is not more than half the price of a first-class hand, the cost of the two hundred would be twenty thousand pounds. To grow one thousand bales of cotton a year you require not only to possess an estate, machinery, tools, and other things necessary to carry on the cotton-growing business, but you must find a capital of twenty thousand pounds to buy the actual labourers by whom the plantation is to be worked; and therefore, as every gentleman will see at once, this great trade, to a large extent, was shut up in the hands of men who were required to be richer than would be necessary if slavery did not exist.

Thus the plantation business to a large extent became a monopoly, and, therefore, even on that account the production of cotton was constantly limited and controlled. I was speaking to a gentleman the other day from Mississippi. I believe no man in America or in England is more acquainted with the facts of this case. He has been for many years a Senator from the State of Mississippi. He told me that every one of these facts was true, and said, 'I have no doubt whatever that in ten years after freedom in the South, or after freedom in conjunction with the North, the production of cotton will be

doubled, and cotton will be forwarded to the consumers of the world at a much less price than we have had it for many years past.'

I shall turn for a moment to the political interest, to which the honourable and learned gentlemen paid much more attention than to the commercial. The more I consider the course of this war, the more I come to the conclusion that it is improbable in future that the United States will be broken into separate republics. I do not come to the conclusion that the North will conquer the South. But I think the conclusion to which I am more disposed to come now than at any time since the breaking out of the war is this—that if a separation should occur for a time, still the interest, the sympathies, the sentiments, the necessities of the whole continent, and its ambition also, which, as honourable gentlemen have mentioned, seems to some people to be a necessity, render it highly probable that the continent would still be united under one central Government.

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Now, there is one more point to which the honourable and learned gentleman will forgive me if I allude—he does not appear to me to think it of great importance—and that is, the morality of this question. The right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the honourable gentleman who spoke from the bench behind—and I think the noble lord, if I am not mistaken—referred to the carnage which is occasioned by this lamentable strife. Well, carnage, I presume, is the accompaniment of all war. Two years ago the press of London ridiculed very much the battles of the United States, in which nobody was killed and few were hurt. There was a time when I stood up in this House, and pointed out the dreadful horrors of war. There was a war waged by this country in the Crimea; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with an uneasy conscience, is constantly striving to defend that struggle. That war—for it lasted about the same time that the American war

Carnage in the Crimea and in America.

has lasted—destroyed at least as many lives as are estimated to have been destroyed in the United States.

My honourable friend the member for Montrose, who, I think, is not in the House, made a speech in Scotland some time last year, in which he gave the numbers which were lost by Russia in that war. An honourable friend near me observes, that some people do not reckon the Russians for anything. I say, if you will add the Russians to the English, and the two to the French, and the three to the Sardinians, and the four to the Turks, that more lives were lost in the invasion of the Crimea, in the two years that it lasted, than have been lost hitherto in the American war. That is no defence of the carnage of the American war; but let honourable gentlemen bear in mind that, when I protested against the carnage in the Crimea—for an object which few could comprehend and nobody can fairly explain—I was told that I was actuated by a morbid sentimentality. Well, if I am converted, if I view the mortality in war with less horror than I did then, it must be attributed to the arguments of honourable gentlemen opposite and on the Treasury bench; but the fact is, I view this carnage just as I viewed that, with only this difference, that while our soldiers perished three thousand miles from home in a worthless and indefensible cause, these men were on their own soil, and every man of them knew for what he enlisted and for what purpose he was to fight.

Now, I will ask the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and those who are of opinion with him on this question of slaughter in the American war—a slaughter which I hope there is no honourable member here, and no person out of this House, that does not in his calm moments look upon with grief and horror—to consider what was the state of things before the war. It was this: that every year in the Slave States of America there were one hundred and fifty thousand children born into the world—born with the badge and the doom of slavery—born to the liability by law, and by custom, and by the devilish cupidity of

man—to the lash and to the chain and to the branding-iron, and to be taken from their families and carried they know not where.

I want to know whether you feel as I feel upon this question. When I can get down to my home from this House, I find half a dozen little children playing upon my hearth. How many members are there who can say with me, that the most innocent, the most pure, the most holy joy which in their past years they have felt, or in their future years they have hoped for, has not arisen from contact and association with our precious children? Well, then, if that be so—if, when the hand of Death takes one of those flowers from our dwelling, our heart is overwhelmed with sorrow and our household is covered with gloom; what would it be if our children were brought up to this infernal system—one hundred and fifty thousand of them every year brought into the world in these Slave States, amongst these 'gentlemen,' amongst this 'chivalry,' amongst these men that we can make our friends?

Do you forget the thousand-fold griefs and the countless agonies which belonged to the silent conflict of slavery before the war began? It is all very well for the honourable and learned gentleman to tell me, to tell this House—he will not tell the country with any satisfaction to it—that slavery, after all, is not so bad a thing. The brother of my honourable friend, the member for South Durham, told me that in North Carolina he himself saw a woman whose every child, ten in number, had been sold when they grew up to the age at which they would fetch a price to their master.

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I want to know, to ask you, the House of Commons, whether you have turned back to your own proceedings in 1834, and traced the praises which have been lavished upon you for thirty years by the great and good men of other countries—and whether, after what you did at that time, you believe that you will meet the views of the thoughtful, moral, and religious people of England, when you propose to remit to

slavery three millions of negroes in the Southern States, who in our views, and regarding the Proclamation of the only President of the United States as a legal document, are certainly and to all intents and purposes free? ['Oh!'] The honourable and learned gentleman may say 'Oh!' and shake his head lightly, and be scornful at this. He has managed to get rid of all those feelings under which all men, black and white, like to be free. He has talked of the cant and hypocrisy of these men. Was Wilberforce, was Clarkson, was Buxton—I might run over the whole list—were these men hypocrites, and had they nothing about them but cant?

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In conclusion, sir, I have only this to say—that I wish to take a generous view of this question—a view, I say, generous with regard to the people with whom we are in amity, whose minister we receive here, and who receive our minister in Washington. We see that the government of the United States has for two years past been contending for its life, and we know that it is contending necessarily for human freedom. That government affords the remarkable example—offered for the first time in the history of the world—of a great government coming forward as the organized defender of law, freedom, and equality.

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I have not said a word with regard to what may happen to England if we go into war with the United States. It will be a war upon the ocean—every ship that belongs to the two nations will, as far as possible, be swept from the seas. But when the troubles in America are over, be they ended by the restoration of the Union, or by separation, that great and free people, the most instructed in the world (there is not an American to be found in the New England States who cannot read and write, and there are not three men in one hundred in the whole Northern States who cannot read and write—and those who cannot read and write are those who have recently come from Europe) I say the most instructed people in the

world, and the most wealthy will have a wound in their hearts by your act which a century may not heal; and the posterity of some of those who now hear my voice may look back with amazement, and I will say with lamentation, at the course which was taken by the honourable and learned gentleman, and by such honourable members as may choose to follow his leading. ['No! No!'] I suppose the honourable gentlemen who cry 'No!' will admit that we sometimes suffer from the errors of our ancestors. There are few persons who will not admit that, if their fathers had been wiser, their children would have been happier.

We know the cause of this revolt, its purposes, and its aims. Those who made it have not left us in darkness respecting their intentions, but what they are to accomplish is still hidden from our sight; and I will abstain now, as I have always abstained with regard to it, from predicting what is to come. I know what I hope for—and what I shall rejoice in—but I know nothing of future facts that will enable me to express a confident opinion. Whether it will give freedom to the race which white men have trampled in the dust, and whether the issue will purify a nation steeped in crimes committed against that race, is known only to the Supreme. In His hands are alike the breath of man and the life of States. I am willing to commit to Him the issue of this dreaded contest; but I implore of Him, and I beseech this House, that my country may lift nor hand nor voice in aid of the most stupendous act of guilt that history has recorded in the annals of mankind.

VI.—THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA

This short passage from a speech delivered by Cobden to his constituents at Rochdale on October 29th, 1862, beginning with a reference to the cotton famine, exhibits and rather exaggerates the distinction between his attitude and that of Bright to the Civil War. For further information the reader must consult Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden* and the large collection of Cobden's speeches which was published after his death by Bright and Thorold Rogers.

GREAT praise has been given to the working class of this district for the fine, the magnanimous, the heroic fortitude which they have displayed on this occasion. Well, I sometimes think that there is something rather invidious in the way in which this compliment is paid to you by some parties. It seems as if they had always been assuming that you are a set of savages, without reason or a sense of justice, and that, whatever befel you, your first impulse was to go and destroy something or somebody in revenge. They must have a very curious idea of the people of this district. It reminds me of an anecdote that I remember:—When the late Dr. Dalton, the eminent philosopher, was presented to King William IV., his Majesty received him with this remark: 'Well, doctor—well, doctor—are you all quiet at Manchester now?'—the idea in his Majesty's head being that in Manchester and the neighbourhood the normal state was one of insurrection or violence. Well, but at least the conduct of this district, of its working population, will stand out all the more honourably before the country when it is known under what circumstances you have borne yourselves so manfully as you have. Where is there another class of the community—I join my right honourable

friend Mr. Gladstone heartily in saying that—I am a south countryman, and therefore I shall not share in any praise I give you in this district—but I don't believe there is any other part of the country where the same number of men would have borne so courageously and manfully the same amount of privation. But still, don't let us make it mere empty compliment—because the people of this country do not care a button for compliments. There is something wanted, and I have no doubt that something more will be had. This is a gigantic evil which has fallen upon this district from no fault of its own, which could not have been foreseen or provided against; and, therefore, the consequences of this great calamity must be borne by the whole country. If they can be borne by voluntary aid from all parts of the kingdom, well; if not, they must be helped by Imperial aid in another form.

But I think, if it is known and fairly understood in all parts of the kingdom what the state of things is, and that a great effort is required, greater than any that has yet been made, I believe that the philanthropy and the generosity of this country will not be found wanting. I would suggest that a systematic plan should be adopted of calling county meetings everywhere by the lord-lieutenants. I have known county meetings called before on much slighter grounds of necessity than this. It is said that there is to be a subscription raised in all the churches. I have no doubt that a large sum will be raised in that way. But it requires that the country should know the necessities of the case, and that the public feeling should not be chilled or distorted by base appeals to their prejudices and their passions. Oh, there is a class of writers in this country—God knows who they are—who support the vendors of such base commodities; there is a class of writers in this country who seem to worship success, and to find no pleasure so great as to jump upon anybody, or any class, that they think is down for the moment, and to trample it still lower in the mire. For myself, I have no doubt whatever that all classes in this country will do their duty. I have heard since I have been in Lancashire

of heroic acts of benevolence performed not only by men, but by women, who have shown a bright example in their districts in the devotion they have evinced to relieve the distress of those immediately around them. I have no doubt that the amount of generosity and charity that is going on in private far transcends that which is known to the public, and that the best friends of the poor are very often the poor themselves. I have not the least doubt, I say, that this district will do its duty, and that when this cloud passes away—as I hope it may before a distant day—I have no doubt that there will be a record of bright and generous acts—I won't say such as is creditable exclusively to this community—but such as will reflect honour upon our common humanity.

Now, gentlemen, coupled with this question is another upon which I must say a few words. We are placed in this tremendous embarrassment in consequence of the civil war that is going on in America. Don't expect me to be going to venture upon ground which other politicians have trodden, with, I think, doubtful success or advantage to themselves—don't think that I am going to predict what is going to happen in America, or that I am going to set myself up as a judge of the Americans. What I wish to do is to say a few words to throw light upon our relations, as a nation, with the American people. I have no doubt whatever that, if I had been an American, I should have been true to my peace principles, and that I should have been amongst, perhaps, a very small number who have voted against, or raised a protest, in some shape or other, against this civil war in America. There is nothing, in the course of this war, that reconciles me to the brutality and the havoc of such a mode of settling human disputes. But the question we have to ask ourselves is this: What is the position which, as a nation, we ought to take with reference to the Americans in this dispute? That is the question which concerns us. It is no use our arguing as to what is the origin of the war, or any use whatever to advise these disputants. From the moment the first shot is fired, or

the first blow is struck, in a dispute, then farewell to all reason and argument; you might as well attempt to reason with mad dogs as with men when they have begun to spill each other's blood in mortal combat. I was so convinced of the fact during the Crimean war, which, you know, I opposed, I was so convinced of the utter uselessness of raising one's voice in opposition to war when it has once begun, that I made up my mind that as long as I was in political life, should a war again break out between England and a great power, I would never open my mouth upon the subject from the time the first gun was fired until the peace was made, because, when a war is once commenced, it will only be by the exhaustion of one party that a termination will be arrived at. If you look back at our history, what did eloquence, in the persons of Chatham or Burke, do to prevent a war with our first American colonies? What did eloquence, in the persons of Fox and his friends, do to prevent the French revolution, or bring it to a close? And there was a man who spoke at the commencement of the Crimean war, in terms of eloquence, in power, and pathos, and argument, equal, I believe, to anything that fell from the lips of Chatham and Burke—I mean your distinguished townsman, my friend Mr. Bright—and what was his success? Why, they burnt him in effigy for his pains.

Well, if we are here powerless as politicians to check a war at home, how useless and unavailing must it be for me to presume to affect in the slightest degree the results of the contest in America! I may say I regret this dreadful and sanguinary war; we all regret it; but to attempt to scold them for fighting, to attempt to argue the case with either, and to reach them with any arguments, while they are standing in mortal combat, a million of them standing in arms and fighting to the death; to think that, by any arguments here, we are to influence or be heard by the combatants engaged on the other side of the Atlantic, is utterly vain. I have travelled twice through almost every free State in America. I know most of the principals engaged in this dreadful contest on both sides. I have kept

myself pretty well informed of all that is going on in that country; and yet, though I think I ought to be as well informed on this subject as most of my countrymen—Cabinet Ministers included—yet, if you were to ask me how this contest is to end, I confess I should find myself totally at a loss to offer an opinion worth the slightest attention on the part of my hearers. But this I will say: If I were put to the torture, and compelled to offer a guess, I should not make the guess which Mr. Gladstone and Earl Russell have made on this subject. I don't believe that, if the war in America is to be brought to a termination, it will be brought to an end by the separation of the South and North. There are great motives at work amongst the large majority of the people in America, which seem to me to drive them to this dreadful contest rather than see their country broken into two. Now, I don't speak of it as having a great interest in it myself. I speak as to a fact. It may seem Utopian, but I don't feel sympathy for a great nation, or for those who desire the greatness of a people by the vast extension of empire. What I like to see is the growth, development, and elevation of the individual man. But we have had great empires at all times—Syria, Persia, and the rest. What trace have they left of the individual man? Nebuchadnezzar, and the countless millions under his sway—there is no more trace of them than of herds of buffaloes, or flocks of sheep. But look at your little States; look at Greece, with its small territories, some not larger than an English county! Italy, over some of whose States a man on horseback could ride in a day—they have left traces of individual man, where civilization has flourished, and humanity been elevated. It may appear Utopian, but we can never expect the individual elevated until a practical and better code of moral law prevails among nations, and until the small States obtain justice at the hands of the great.

Small States and great empires.

But leaving these matters: What are the facts of the present day—what appears to be the paramount instinct

amongst the races of men? Certainly not a desire to separate, but a desire to agglomerate, to bring together in greater concentration the different races speaking the same language, and professing the same religion. What do you see going on in Italy—what stirs now the heart of Germany—what moves Hungary? Is it not wishing to get together? I find in the nations of Europe no instinct pervading the mass of mankind which may lead them to a separation from each other; but I find a powerful movement all through Europe for the agglomeration of races. But is it not very odd that statesmen here who have a profound sympathy for the movement in Italy in favour of unity, cannot at least appreciate unity in looking upon the probabilities and the chances of a civil contest—cannot also duly appreciate the force of that motive in the present contest in America? Three-fourths of the white population are contending against disunion; they are following the instinct which is impelling the Italians, the Germans, and other populations of Europe; and I have no doubt that one great and dominant motive in the minds of three-fourths of the white people in America is this:—They are afraid, if they become disunited, they will be treated as Italy has been treated when she was disunited—that a foreigner will come and set his intrusive foot upon it, and play off one against another to their degradation, and probable subjection. Without pretending to offer an opinion myself, these are powerful motives, and, if they are operating as they appear to operate, it may lead to a much more protracted contest than has been predicted by some of our statesmen.

But the business we really have here as Englishmen is not to speculate upon what the Americans will do, for they will act totally independent of us. Give them your sympathy as a whole; say, 'Here is a most lamentable calamity that has befallen a great nation in its pride.' Give them your sympathy. Lament over a great misfortune, but don't attempt to scold and worry them, or dictate to them, or even to predict for them what will happen. But what is our duty towards them

in this matter? Well, now, we have talked of strict neutrality. But I wish our statesmen, and particularly our cabinet ministers, would enforce upon their own tongues a little of that principle of non-intervention which they profess to apply to their diplomacy. We are told very frequently at public meetings that we must recognize the South. Well, but that recognition of the South is always coupled with another object—it is, to obtain the cotton that you want, because, if it was not for the distress brought upon us by the civil war in America, I don't think humanity would induce us to interfere there any more than it does in wars going on in other parts of the world.

But, now, let us try to dispel this floating fallacy which is industriously spread over the land—probably by interested parties. Your recognition of the South would not give you cotton. The recognition of the South, in the minds of parties who use that term, is coupled with something more. There is an idea of going and interfering by force to put an end to that contest, in order that the cotton may be set free. If I were President Lincoln, and found myself rather in difficulty on account of the pressure of taxation, and on account of the discord of parties in the Federal ranks, and if I wanted to see the whole population united as one man, and ready to make me a despot; if I could choose that post, and not only unite every man but every woman in my support—then I could wish nothing better than that England or France, or both together, should come and attempt to interfere by force in this quarrel. You read now of the elections going on in America. And I look to those elections with the greatest interest, as the only indications to guide me in forming a judgment of the future. You see it stated that in these elections there is some disunion of party. But let the foreigners attempt to interfere in that quarrel, and all old lines of demarcation are effaced for ever. You will have one united population joining together to repel that intrusion. It was so in France, in their great revolutionary war. What begat the union there? What caused the

Reign of Terror? What was it that ruined every man who breathed a syllable of dissent from the despotic and bloody Government enthroned in Paris—what was it but the cry of alarm that 'the foreigner is invading us,' and the feeling that these were the betrayers of the country, because they were the friends of the foreigner? But your interference would not obtain cotton. Your interference would have, in the present state of armaments, very little effect upon the combatants there. If people were generally better acquainted with the geography of that country and the state of its population, they would see how much we are apt to exaggerate even our power to interfere to produce any result in that contest. The policy to be pursued by the North will be decided by the elections in the great Western States: I mean the great grain-growing region of the Mississippi valley. If the States of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota —if those States determine to carry on this war—if they say, 'We will never make peace and give up the mouth of the Mississippi, which drains our 10,000 miles of navigable waters into the gulf of Mexico; we will never make peace while that river is in the hands of a foreign Power'—why, all the Powers of Europe cannot reach that 'far West' to coerce it. It is 1000 miles inland across the Rocky Mountains, or 1000 miles up the Mississippi, with all its windings, before you get to that vast region—that region which is rich beyond all the rest of the world besides, peopled by ten or twelve millions of souls, doubling in numbers every few years. It is that region which will be the depository in future of the wealth and numbers of that great Continent; and whatever the decision of that region is, New York, and New England, and Pennsylvania will agree with that decision.

Therefore, watch what the determination of that people is; and if they determine to carry on the war, whatever the hideous proportions of that war may be, and however it may affect your interests, be assured that it is idle to talk—idle as the talk of children—as if it were possible for England to

pretend, if it would, to carry on hostilities in the West. And, for my part, I think the language which is used sometimes in certain quarters with regard to the power of this country to go and impose its will upon the population in America, is something almost savouring of the ludicrous. When America had but 2,500,000 people, we found it impossible to enforce our will upon that population; but the progress and tendency of modern armaments are such, that where you have to deal with a rich and civilized people, having the same mechanical appliances as you have, and where that people number fifteen or twenty millions, it is next to impossible for any force to be transported across the Atlantic able to coerce that people. I should wish, therefore, that idea of force—and oh! Englishmen have a terrible tendency to think they can resort to force—should be abandoned on this occasion. The case is utterly unmanageable by force, and interference could only do harm. What good would it do to the population of this country? You would not get your cotton; but if you could, what price would you pay for it? I know something of the way in which money is voted in the House of Commons for warlike armaments, even in time of peace, and I have seen what was done during a year and a half of war. I will venture to say, that it would be cheaper to keep all the population engaged in the cotton manufacture—ay, to keep them upon turtle, champagne, and venison—than to send to America to obtain cotton by force of arms. That would involve you in a war, and six months of that war would cost more money than would be required to maintain this population comfortably for ten years.

No, gentlemen; what we should endeavour to do, as the result of this war, is to put an end to that system of warfare which brings this calamity home to our doors, by making such alterations in the maritime law of nations which affects the rights of belligerents and neutrals, as will render it impossible, in the future, for innocent non-combatants and neutrals here to be made to suffer, as they now do, almost as much as those

who are carrying on the war there. Well, if you can, out of this great disaster, make such a reform as will prevent the recurrence of such another, it is, perhaps, all that you can do in the matter. I won't enter into that subject now, because I have entered at some length into it elsewhere, and I shall have to deal with it again in the House of Commons. All I wish to say is this—that it is in the power of England to adopt such a system of maritime law, with the ready assent of all the other Powers, as will prevent the possibility of such a state of things being brought upon us in future. And I will say this, that I doubt the wisdom—I certainly doubt the prudence—of a great body of industrious people allowing themselves to continually live in dependence upon foreign Powers for the supply of food and raw material, knowing that a system of warfare exists by which, at any moment, without notice, without any help on their part or means of prevention, they are liable to have the raw material or the food withdrawn from them—cut off from them suddenly—without any power to resist or hinder it.

Now, that is the only good that I can see that we can do for ourselves in this matter. Yes; there is one other good thing that we might do. We have seen a great country, in the very height of its power, feeling itself almost exempt from the ordinary calamities of older nations—we have seen that country suddenly prostrated, and become a cause of sorrow rather than of envy or admiration to its friends elsewhere; and what should be the monition to us? Ask yourselves whether there is any great injustice unredressed in this country? Ask if there is any flaw in our institutions in England requiring an adjustment or correction, one that, if not dealt with in time, may lead to a great disaster like that in America? It is not by stroking our beards, and turning up our eyes like the Pharisee, and thanking Heaven we are not as other men are, that we learn; but it is by studying such a calamity as this; by asking ourselves, is there anything in our dealings with Ireland, is there anything in India, is

there anything appertaining to the rights and franchises of the great mass of our own population, that requires dealing with? If so, let what has taken place in America be a warning to us, and let us deal with an evil while there is time, and not allow it to find us out in the hour of distress and adversity.

PART IV

COLONIAL AND FISCAL POLICY

COLONIAL AND FISCAL POLICY

'WHAT is the reason,' asked Cobden once when he was discussing the fiscal relations of Ireland to Great Britain 'why no statesman has ever dreamt of proposing that the colonies shall sit with the mother country in a common Legislature?' His answer goes to the root of the matter. 'It is not because of the space between them, for, nowadays, travelling was almost as quick as thought; but because the colonies, not paying Imperial taxation, and not being liable for our debt, cannot be allowed with safety to us, or with propriety to themselves, to legislate on matters of taxation in which they are not themselves concerned.' If representatives from the colonies were allowed to sit in the House of Commons 'an ambitious and unscrupulous minister would be sure to make use of them for the purpose of oppressing the English people.' Such a minister, observed Cobden, might say to the Canadian representatives, 'Help me in such a case, and I'll help you to prevent England from putting a tax on Canada.' In short, Imperial federation would mean irresponsible government. The object of the Manchester School was not an empire but a commonwealth of autonomous communities. If you have to choose between self-government and good government choose self-government. But that uncomfortable choice has never presented itself in the case of a real colony. The rule of Downing Street over distant communities of European race has always been unsatisfactory to the colony and costly to the mother country, not seldom oppressive, sometimes provocative of war and disastrous to civilization. In 1877 Mr. Bright was

asked what he thought of the protective policy of Victoria. In the course of a letter which breathes throughout the spirit of political toleration he made some observations which false exponents of the Manchester School should lay to heart: 'If a Government voted a sum of money to support a steamboat enterprise which was deemed of great service to the country, but which from its novelty or its risk private capitalists would not undertake, I should say that in doing this no sound principle would be broken, and that the public interest might possibly be wisely served. So if a Government thought that if a new culture might be introduced into the country, such as the grape or tea, it might appropriate a sum of money to make that experiment, leaving its future progress or fate entirely to the industry and disposition of the people.' Here is one of the leaders of the Manchester School perfectly ready to admit the propriety of Government enterprise in certain cases. Does this involve a weakening in doctrine? Let us continue the quotation: 'But to enact a tariff imposing heavy duties on most important articles of comfort, to establish an oppressive and costly system of custom-houses, to build up special interests before their time, or industries which might never thrive in the free air of competition, at the expense of taxation upon the whole people, levied partly at the custom-houses, and partly by the high prices which are sought to be obtained on the home-made and protected article, is a policy so unsound and so injurious that I am greatly surprised that any one in the least acquainted with me or with my life should have supposed it possible that I should have given it my support.

'Englishmen form colonies at a distance from the mother country. They throw off many of the superstitions which are still to a large extent cherished in England. In respect of protection by means of a prohibitive or restrictive tariff, the colony of Victoria clings to a superstition or error which we in England have abandoned. Our experience is conclusive as to the wisdom of our policy. Victoria is young, and thinks she knows more and better than we know. But when she finds

herself, not at the head, but at the tail of the great Australian communities as to her success and the growth of wealth, she may discover that industry has no greater enemy than a protective or restrictive tariff.'[1]

One of the principal objects of colonial emancipation was to get rid of the cost of military and civil establishments in our distant possessions and so to free large sums of money for fiscal and social reform at home. Experience had shown that governors armed with large powers are a constant source of danger and expense. The colonial system was a system of political and fiscal bondage. Imperial tariffs as well as imperial governors were maintained by soldiers and ships of war. In the speech of Sir William Molesworth the character and cost of the old system, to which we are now invited to return, will be found very faithfully depicted. As we have already seen, Molesworth's speech was endorsed by Cobden, and no student of English history during the second half of the nineteenth century will deny that the policy outlined in the speech, and in the letter which precedes it, was carried out with extraordinary fidelity by successive parliaments. The two extracts dealing with the German Zollverein, and with the proposals for a British Customs Union, complete our view of the colonial policy of the Manchester School.

[1] Letter from John Bright to T. B. Potter, July 31st, 1877.

I.—THE RELATION OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POLICY TO FISCAL REFORM

The following letter was written by Cobden to Robertson Gladstone (W. E. Gladstone's younger brother), who was then doing admirable work as president of the Financial Reform Association. The letter is dated London, 103, Westbourne Terrace, 18th December, 1848. Within a little more than a generation the whole of Cobden's 'National Budget' was adopted.

DEAR SIR,—I gathered from the conversation I had with you and the members of the Financial Reform Association in Liverpool, that you have two objects in view. First, the substitution of direct for indirect taxation; and secondly, a diminution of the present amount of Government expenditure. I ventured to offer an opinion, which I now beg to repeat, that it would be far easier to effect a reduction of expenditure to the extent of £10,000,000 and apply the whole of that sum to the removal of Excise and Customs duties, than to transfer the same amount from indirect to direct taxation. Excepting in Liverpool and a few of our largest trading towns, there is not, at present, a very great force of public opinion in favour of direct taxation. It has yet to be created and organized. But there is a very general sympathy felt in the proceedings of your body, founded upon a strong desire to have the burthens of taxation lightened; and there is some expectation that you will put forth a plan for effecting that object. My reason for now troubling you is, to suggest whether it might not be advisable to publish a NATIONAL BUDGET, exhibiting on one side a considerable reduction in the expenditure, and on the other the several Excise and Customs duties which you propose, in the first

Suggestions for a national budget.

place, to abolish. I do not mean by this, a perfect financial scheme, such as may be contemplated as the ulterior object of your Association, but a plan which, whilst it went in the direction of your principle of direct taxation, and relieved the mass of consumers from a heavy tax upon their necessaries and comforts, should commit those politicians of all shades who now join in the vague cry for 'economy and retrenchment' to some practical measure worth contending for.

I suggest that you take for the basis of your budget the expenditure of 1835. The whole cost of the Government in that year, including interest of debt, was £44,422,000. For the twelve months ending the 5th April last, it amounted to £55,175,000, being an increase of £10,753,000. The interest of the debt was less by £87,000 in the latter than the former year, making the comparison so much the more unfavourable to 1848. The estimated expenditure for the current year ending the 5th April, 1849 (see Lord John Russell's speech 18th February last), is £54,596,000; so that we may take the increase to be, in round numbers, £10,000,000 since 1835. Do you see any good reasons why we should not return to the expenditure of that year? Englishmen love precedents; and they are not easily persuaded that anything is Utopian or impracticable which has been accomplished within the last thirteen years; and this is one reason, though I will find you a better, why you should base your budget upon that of 1835. If we go back a little further, to the time when this nation was still under the rule of the boroughmongers, we shall find a startling argument in favour of this plan. In 1830, the last year of the Wellington-Peel administration, the expenditure for all purposes exclusive of the interest of the debt, was £18,024,000; for the twelve months ending the 5th April of the present year, it amounted to £26,747,000. The Tory Government was overturned the following year, upon the motion of Sir Henry Parnell, in favour of economy, and the House was soon after reformed, merely on the plea of its profligate waste of the people's money; and yet we have

now an increase to the expenditure of £8,723,000, or nearly 50 per cent. as the fruits of the Reform Act. *We are now actually expending more upon the Army, Navy, and Ordnance alone than was sufficient for the maintenance of the whole civil and military establishments under the Duke of Wellington's Government!* When these facts shall be generally known, the country will, I think, be in the humour for responding to your appeal, if you inscribe as the motto upon your banner, '*The Expenditure of* 1835;' which will be a reduction of £10,000,000 from this year's budget.

I would not advise you to complicate your plan by proposing any new imposts to rouse the antagonism of interested parties, or any modifications or substitutions of existing taxes, to destroy that simplicity of object which, above all things, is necessary to the success of a public agitation. But there is one tax from which the dominant class in this country has exempted itself for half a century, which exemption it would be disgraceful to the character of the British people any longer to tolerate—I mean the probate and legacy duty. In the last year upwards of two millions was paid into the exchequer by the heirs to personal property, consisting mainly of the hard-earned accumulations of our merchants, manufacturers, professional men, traders, and mechanics; whilst the ducal domain, or the estate of the great landed proprietor, passed untaxed from the dead to the living. This year will be memorable for having witnessed the destruction of the last remaining powers of feudalism in all the countries of the Continent, excepting Russia. But I know of no privilege which the nobles of Prussia, Gallicia, or Hungary have been compelled to surrender, as a tribute to the enlightenment of this age, more unjust in principle than that which is conferred upon our landed proprietors in the statute passed by themselves, imposing duties exclusively upon the inheritance of personal property. Let us not boast of English freedom, or of equality before the law, whilst this injustice remains. In what form could aristocratic privilege assume a more offensive

and costly aspect than in that of a bold and palpable exemption from taxation? I do not think that great resistance will be offered to the equitable adjustment of this tax, provided the people speak out as becomes them. No living proprietor will be affected by the change; and the landowners are as conscious as you or I that these are not times for transmitting such a class privilege to posterity. I assume that the probate and legacy duty upon real estate, entailed and unentailed, will yield, at a moderate estimate, £1,500,000. By the above plan you would have a disposable surplus revenue of £11,500,000 —viz. ten millions from the reduction of expenditure, and a million and a half from the increased produce of the probate and legacy duty.

I will now trouble you with my views as to the disposal of that amount; premising that I have not felt quite free to choose in every instance those items of the Customs and Excise duties, which I should myself have preferred to abolish or reduce, but have been partly influenced by the desire to enlist the sympathy and support of every class and interest in the community, whose co-operation will be abundantly requisite to force the adoption of the plan upon the Government.

To begin with the Customs duties. The present duty of 2*s.* 2*d.* a pound upon tea, whether viewed as a tax upon the most harmless stimulant enjoyed by the people, or as an impediment to the operations of our merchants trading with China, is one of the most indefensible in the tariff. I would reduce the duty to 1*s.* a pound, or an *ad-valorem* duty yielding the same amount of revenue, by which, according to the estimate of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech on Mr. Cardwell's motion, there would be a loss for the first year of £2,000,000. The duty on timber and wood must be wholly abolished. This is a necessary consequence, if not an accompaniment of the repeal of the navigation laws. The amount is £945,000. (I have taken this and all the following items from the finance accounts for the year ending January 5th, 1848, deducting the expense of

Customs.

collection.) I propose, also, to take the duty off butter, cheese, and upwards of one hundred items of the Customs duties, yielding altogether £516,000; and leaving only about twenty articles in the tariff paying duty.

These three sums amount to £3,461,000.

Next, with reference to the Excise. It may be laid down as a rule, that whenever you touch an Excise duty at all, it should be totally abolished; because the great objection to such taxes—the interference of the exciseman with the process of production—applies equally whether the duty be great or small. This should be borne in mind if you deal with the malt tax; and you *must* deal with it, if you would enlist the sympathy of the county constituencies in your movement. To a man, the farmers are in favour of the repeal of the malt tax; and this not merely because it would add to the content-

Excise.

ment of the peasantry, by cheapening a beverage which they universally consume, and also relieve their employers from a heavy tax upon the beer which they give to their labourers at certain seasons, but the best agriculturists loudly protest against the duty, on the plea that it denies them the free application of their capital to the fattening of cattle upon malt, and thus prevents the profitable growth of barley upon stiff clay lands. Upon this subject Mr. Lattimore, speaking for an influential deputation of landlords and farmers, which had an interview with Lord John Russell in February last, said, 'The malt tax disarranged the best modes of cultivation, enhanced the price of artificial food for stock and cattle, whereby the fertility of the soil was deteriorated, the demand for labour lessened, the supply of bread-corn and animal food considerably decreased, and the comforts of the people and the wealth of the country were also greatly impaired.' Your 'National Budget' would, therefore, be undeserving the name if it did not include the total repeal of the malt tax, amounting to £4,260,000.

In Kent, Sussex, and two or three other counties, there is an active agitation against the hop duty. The expense of

collecting this tax is alone sufficient to condemn it. Nothing could so well exemplify the wasteful and costly process of collecting revenue by means of excise duties as the spectacle exhibited, for a month or six weeks every autumn, of a little army of excisemen dispersing themselves over half a score of counties, to levy a tax in the fields and gardens of the hop-planters. I question if anything more barbarous could be met with in Turkey, or any uncivilized country, where political economy had never been heard of even by name. I propose, therefore, the abolition of the hop duty, amounting to £416,000. By including the malt and hop duties you will insure the co-operation of the farmers, who, now that free trade is the settled principle of our legislation, have a common interest with the inhabitants of the towns. The landlords, too (at least such of them as are not merely professional politicians), will henceforth be found in the front ranks of those who advocate economy and retrenchment in the national expenditure. Already they have begun to ask, and with good reason—Why should we not have cheap government as well as cheap corn?

Next is the article of soap. What a satire upon our sanitary acts, and all the pompous agitations in favour of baths and wash-houses, is this tax upon the necessary elements of cleanliness! Not a word need be said upon it. The duty, amounting to £850,000, must come off, if it be only to cleanse us from the stain of national hyprocrisy. That which soap is to the skin, literature is to the healthy action of the mind, and yet we raise £720,000 a year from a heavy duty upon paper. By including this in your budget, you will promote the religious, moral, and intellectual advancement of the people, in a manner acceptable to all parties, whatever may be their views upon the subject of national education. The last two items will draw towards you the sympathies of the Scotch Excise Reformers.

These four sums amount to £6,246,000.

Lastly, I come to taxes, properly so called. There is the

window tax, which, although it does not, like the Excise duties, operate as a direct impediment to productive industry, is open to the fearful objection, that it 'obstructs the light of heaven;' and, in these brief words, we may read its inevitable doom. London, Bath, and other large cities are pressing the abolition of this tax annually upon the House, through Lord Duncan, and you must not think of excluding it from your 'National Budget.' It yields £1,610,000. My 'way and means' are so nearly exhausted, that I can only add the advertisement duty, amounting to £160,000.

These two sums amount to £1,770,000. The total loss of revenue by the reduction of the above duties and taxes is £11,477,000, or £23,000 less than the £11,500,000 of surplus which I propose to create, by the diminution of expenditure, and the equalization of the probate and legacy duty. I subjoin a summary of the foregoing, in a concise tabular form:—

NATIONAL BUDGET.

Proposed reduction of expenditure	£10,500,000		
Proposed legacy and probate duty upon real estate, whether entailed or unentailed	1,000,000		
Proposed amount of surplus revenue	£11,500,000		
Proposed reduction of Duties and Taxes:—			*Loss of Revenue.*
CUSTOMS DUTIES.			
Tea—Duty to be reduced to one shilling per pound		£2,000,000	
Timber and Wood—Duty abolished		945,000	
Butter, Cheese, and upwards of one hundred smaller items of the tariff Duties abolished		516,000	
Total loss upon Customs			£3,461,000
EXCISE DUTIES.			
Malt—Duty abolished		£4,260,000	
Hops— " "		416,000	
Soap— " "		850,000	
Paper— " "		720,000	
Total loss on Excise			£6,246,000
TAXES.			
Window Tax—abolished		£1,610,000	
Advertisement Duty—abolished		160,000	
Total of Taxes			£1,770,000
Total loss upon Customs, Excise, and Taxes			£11,477,000

I repeat that I do not propose this as a complete financial scheme. Many articles are omitted which I should not wish

to be considered to have willingly excluded, or be thought to have overlooked. I have gone again and again through the dismal catalogue of our fiscal burdens, and if there be any item of the Customs or Excise duties which you are sorry to miss from the above table, be assured that the omission has caused me equal regret. Bricks ought especially to stand one of the first on the list for a prospective budget. Tobacco is a very strong case, but it involves so large an amount of revenue that I could not include it. The wine duties also call for a revision; not to name others. Then there are some duties and taxes, the modification of which does not necessarily involve a loss of revenue, and which may be dealt with independently of the present plan. The duties on foreign and colonial coffee ought to be forthwith equalized; the property and income tax should be revised, and a just discrimination made between fixed and precarious incomes. For the stamp upon newspapers, a stamped envelope might be substituted, bearing upon those only which are transmitted by post; and the stamp duties, generally, call loudly for an equitable revision. I mention these examples to show, that, by adopting the proposed 'National Budget,' you would not be precluded from effecting other financial reforms. On the contrary, I believe if the industry of the country were further disburthened to the extent I have named, there would be an accruing surplus revenue from the remaining sources of taxation, which would afford the means of continually making further modifications and reductions of duties. This would have been the case in times past, notwithstanding all the restrictions upon our commerce, if the increasing income had not been swallowed up by Government extravagance. For instance—had not the expenditure been increased since the time of the Duke of Wellington's administration, in 1830, then, notwithstanding the very large amount of taxes and duties since remitted, there would now have been a surplus revenue *without the income tax.*

A word or two as to the mode by which I would reduce our expenditure to the amount of 1835. The great increase, since that year, has been upon the army, navy, and ordnance. In the year 1835 our armaments cost us £11,657,000; for the twelve months ended on the 5th day of April last, they reached, including £1,100,000 for the Kaffir war, £19,341,000; and I expect that the charge for the present year will not be much less. For the same time, the total expenditure of the Government, exclusive of the interest of the debt, was £26,747,000, and deducting £19,341,000, the cost of our warlike establishments, it leaves only £7,406,000 to cover the whole of the civil expenses of the Government. It will be self-evident, then, that if any material retrenchment be effected, it must be mainly upon our armaments, the cost of which has been increased £7,000,000; and this during a period of profound peace, and in the absence of all revolutionary convulsions, and while each successive speech from the Throne assured the assembled Parliament of the pacific disposition of all foreign powers. But if we take into calculation the present reduced value of commodities, it will be found that £10,000,000 expended upon our armaments now will go much further than £11,657,000 did in 1835; and I suggest that you propose the former sum as the *maximum* expenditure for the army, navy, and ordnance, by which you will gain about £8,500,000 of the proposed saving of £10,000,000. I by no means, however, wish to committ your Association to ten millions, as the *minimum* cost of our armaments, for I have a strong belief that you will live to see the waste reduced to less than half that sum. The above-named amount will be three times as great as that of the United States; greater than that incurred for the same purpose by Russia, Austria, or Prussia; and, judging by her promised reductions, nearly, if not quite, as large as that of France.

Military expenditure.

The remaining £1,500,000, to complete the proposed reduction of £10,000,000, you will have little difficulty in

saving from all the other heads of expenditure, including the cost of collecting the revenue, and the management of the Crown lands.

I repeat, emphatically, all hope of any material relief from taxation hinges upon the question of a large reduction in the cost of our army, navy, and ordnance. If it be objected that I do not specify the particular regiments or ships which I propose to reduce, my answer is, that the only way in which the public can restrict the Government at all, in its warlike expenditure at a time of peace, is by limiting the amount of money. Disband a regiment, or pay off a ship to-day, and the amount saved may be spent to-morrow upon steam-basins, or for fresh fortifications at Gibraltar, Labuan, or Hong Kong. This was the view entertained by Sir Henry Parnell, a great Whig authority, who, in his work upon *Financial Reform*, written when the Duke of Wellington was at the head of affairs, whilst arguing for a reduction in the expenditure of our military department, says: 'Fix upon a much smaller sum, and tell them that they must make it answer.' There is another good reason for this course. Some influential persons, who are opposed to any diminution of the strength of our armaments, yet contend that the present force may be kept up at a very reduced cost. In their eyes, your *maximum* sum represents a much larger force than you contemplate. These parties, probably, would be as willing as myself to put an end to the crimes and cruelties imported into the slave trade by the interference of our costly fleet of cruisers upon the African coast; or there may be other savings contemplated by them; so that, perhaps, in their opinion, with an expenditure of ten millions, nearly as large an effective force as at present may be maintained.

But I am prepared to contend for changes in our foreign, colonial, and domestic policy (though I will not attempt to do so at length now), calculated to facilitate a reduction in the amount of our armaments. First and foremost, we must insist that the principle of non-interference

Non-interference.

in the affairs of foreign countries, so loudly professed by politicians of all parties, shall be carried into practice in the policy of our Government. During the whole of last year, a fleet, as formidable as that required by the Americans to watch over their commerce in all parts of the globe, was maintained in the Tagus, out of the taxes of the British people, for the service of the Court and Government of Portugal. At this moment we have as large a fleet in the Straits of Messina, engaged in an armed interference between the King of Naples and his Sicilian subjects, with no more interest or right on our part than the Government of the United States would have to send a squadron off Holyhead, and assume the character of an armed mediator between England and Ireland. For three or four years we have had a fleet in the River Plate, interfering in the endless and inexplicable squabbles of the Monte Videans and Buenos Ayreans, and it has at last ended in a ridiculous failure. I would wish to see our Government spare the people this useless expense, by simply following the rule observed by individuals, of leaving other nations to settle their quarrels, and minding its own business better.

I am also aware, that any great reduction in our military establishments must depend upon a complete change in our colonial system; and I consider such a change to be the necessary consequence of our recent commercial policy. I am prepared to carry out, logically, the principle of free trade in our future relationship with our colonies. Nay, more. I always contemplated that the practical application of that principle would so simplify the question, that it would not be possible afterwards to continue the ruinous colonial expenditure which we have hitherto sustained. So long as protection was our ruling policy, the nation believed that the exclusive trade with our colonies compensated us for the expense of governing and guarding them. I did not, of course, share in that opinion, but there was consistency, if not wisdom, in those who did. But we have now declared that, for all commercial purposes, they shall in

The colonies.

future stand in precisely the same relationship towards us as foreign countries. For seventy years we have denied ourselves the right, by statute, to tax them for imperial purposes. Under these altered circumstances, will anybody be found, even amongst the Protectionists, ay, even Lord Stanhope himself, who is prepared to maintain that henceforth the only exclusive connexion we are to preserve with our colonies is the monopoly of the expense of governing and garrisoning them? Once let them see that free trade is the irrevocable policy of the country, and the Protectionists themselves will join with me in demanding an exemption from the expense of the thirty or forty little armies, which (exclusive of the troops in the merely military fortresses of Gibraltar, etc.) are maintained at the cost of this country in all parts of the globe; together with the little army always afloat, for the purpose, incredible as such folly may hereafter appear, of transporting reliefs of soldiers from England to serve as policemen for Englishmen at the antipodes! We have only to give to the colonists that which is their birthright—the control over their expenditure, and the administration of their own local affairs, and they will be willing, as they are perfectly able, to bear all the cost of their own civil and military establishments.

And, finally, I contend that we must endeavour to act at home more in accordance with the good old constitutional principle of governing by the civil and not the military power. We are, I fear, tending towards too great a reliance upon soldiers, and too little on measures calculated to insure the contentment of the great body of the people. It were madness indeed to think of relying upon bayonets for the permanent support of our institutions, after the warning examples afforded by so many countries on the Continent, where, so lately, we saw military despotism crumbling beneath the weight of its own intolerable costliness: and even if armed authority have everywhere resumed its sway, has that solved the problem of their financial embarrassments? On the contrary, they have only entered again upon the more vicious circle, where

enormous armaments lead to increased expenditure, to be met with augmented taxes, which will be followed by groaning discontent, and end, as before, in convulsion.

I cannot conclude without tendering you and your fellow-labourers my best thanks. By your efforts to mitigate the pressure of unjust taxation, to remove all obstacles from the path of industry, and to widen the channels of foreign commerce, you are doing that which, more than armed regiments, will contribute to the stability of our institutions and the peace and prosperity of the country. It will be gratifying to me if, in this too long letter, I have succeeded in rendering the slightest service to the cause in which you are embarked. My sole object has been to give a practical aim to your valuable efforts, so that at every step you take you may find yourselves nearer to a defined object, the attainment of which shall be some recompense for the labours of an agitation which I trust will become national.

I remain, dear sir, faithfully yours,

RICHARD COBDEN.

II.—COLONIAL EXPENDITURE AND GOVERNMENT IN 1848

The following speech was delivered by Sir Wm. Molesworth, in the House of Commons, on July 25th, 1848. It was circulated at the time by the Financial Reform Association, and was justly described as 'a complete and searching exposure of colonial administration.'

Sir,—In submitting to the consideration of the House the motion of which I have given notice, I must entreat the indulgence of the House; for the nature and extent of the subject will compel me to trespass at some length upon its patience. My object is, in the first instance, to call the attention of the House to the amount of the colonial expenditure of the British empire; and in so doing, I shall endeavour to establish the following positions: 1st, That the colonial expenditure can be diminished without detriment to the interests of the empire; 2nd, That the system of colonial policy and government can be so amended, as to ensure more economical, and altogether better, government for the colonies. And lastly, that by these reforms the resources of the colonies would be developed, they would become more useful, and their inhabitants more attached to the British empire.

In speaking of colonies, I do not intend to include under that term the territories which are governed by the East India Company, but shall confine my remarks to those foreign possessions of the Crown which are under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office. Notwithstanding this limitation, the colonial empire of Great Britain contains between four and

five millions of square miles—an area equal to the whole of Europe and British India added together. Of this vast space about one million of square miles have been divided into forty different colonies, each with a separate government: four of them are in Europe, five in North America, fifteen in the West Indies, three in South America, five in Africa and its vicinity, three among the Asiatic islands, and five in Australia and New Zealand. The population of these colonies does not exceed 5,000,000; of this number about 2,500,000 are of the European race, of whom about 500,000 are French, about 350,000 are Ionians and Maltese, a few are Dutch or Spaniards, and the remainder, amounting to about 1,600,000, are of English, Irish, or Scotch descent. Of the 2,500,000 inhabitants of the colonies who are not of European race, about 1,400,000 are Cingalese, and other inhabitants of Ceylon, and 1,100,000 are of African origin. In 1844 (the last complete return) the declared value of British produce and manufactures exported to the colonies, amounted to about £9,000,000 sterling. The whole colonial expenditure of the British empire is about £8,000,000 sterling a year; one half of which is defrayed by the colonies, and one half by Great Britain. That portion of the colonial expenditure which is defrayed by Great Britain, consists of military, naval, civil, and extraordinary expenditure.

Definition of terms.

Firstly, the net military expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies (including ordnance and commissariat expenditure), was returned to Parliament, for the year 1832, at £1,761,505; for the year 1835–36, at £2,030,059; and for the year 1843–44 (the last return), at £2,556,919, an increase between 1832 and 1843 of £795,414. The present military expenditure is probably about the same as it was in 1843–44; for the military force in the colonies amounts at present to about 42,000 men (exclusive of artillery and engineers), or to about three-eighths of the whole military force of the British empire (exclusive of the army in India). For this amount of force

Military expenditure on colonies.

we shall have to vote this year, first, in the army estimates for the pay, clothing, etc., of 42,000 men, and for the foreign staff, about £1,500,000; secondly, in the ordnance estimates for the pay of the artillery and engineers (which I will suppose to be the same as in 1843–44), for ordnance establishments, barracks, fortifications, and stores in the colonies, about £500,000; and thirdly, in the commissariat estimates for commissariat services, provisions, forage, fuel, light, etc., in the colonies, about £450,000: in all, about £2,500,000, which will be the direct military expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, for this year. To form a fair estimate of the whole military expenditure by Great Britain on account of the colonies, for one year, it would be necessary to add to this sum of £2,500,000, a very considerable sum, on account of reliefs, military establishments at home, and other matters, which are in part required in order to keep up so large a military force in the colonies. It is evident, therefore, that I shall underestimate the military expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, when I set it down at only £2,500,000 a year.

Secondly, with regard to the naval expenditure by Great Britain on account of the colonies. At present we have about 235 ships in commission, with a complement not much short of 40,000 men. Of these ships, about 132, with a complement of about 25,000 men, are on foreign stations: some in the Mediterranean, some on the North American and West Indian station, some off the west coast of Africa and the Cape of Good Hope, others in the Chinese and Indian seas, or protecting our interests in New Zealand. Now, the House will remember that, in every debate that has taken place this year on the estimates, the extent of our colonial empire, and the new colonies which are springing up in Australia, New Zealand, and the Chinese and Indian seas, were among the chief causes assigned by the noble lord the member for the City of London, and the honourable gentleman the member for Sheffield, for the

Naval expenditure on colonies.

enormous amount of the naval force of Great Britain, and for the increase of that force, which has doubled both in magnitude and cost during the last thirteen or fourteen years. I may, therefore, without exaggeration, assume that at least one-third of the ships on foreign stations—that is, one-fifth of the ships in commission—or 45 ships, with a complement of about 8000 men, are maintained on account of the colonies. Now, I infer from the estimates, and from the returns presented to the House, that these ships will cost the country annually, for wages and victuals of crews, wear and tear of vessels and stores, more than £700,000. In addition to this sum, we shall have to vote this year, in the navy estimates, £65,000 for naval establishments in the colonies, another £65,000 for naval works and repairs in the colonies, and £181,000 for freight and other matters connected with the conveyance of troops to the colonies. These sums, added together, will give a total of above £1,000,000 sterling as the direct naval expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, for one year. To form a fair estimate of the whole naval expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, for one year, it would be necessary to add to this sum of £1,000,000 sterling, a very considerable sum on account of reliefs, and of building new ships, likewise a portion of the cost of the naval establishments at home, and likewise a portion of the expense of the packet service to the colonies, which last item alone costs £418,000 a year. It is evident, therefore, that I shall very much underestimate the naval expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, when I set it down at only £1,000,000 sterling a year, or at one-eighth of the whole naval expenditure of Great Britain.

Civil and ecclesiastical expenditure.

Thirdly, the civil expenditure by Great Britain on account of the colonies is chiefly defrayed by sums annually voted in the miscellaneous estimates, under the head of colonial services; some portion of it, however, is paid for under Acts of Parliament. It may be estimated this year at £300,000. It consists of numerous

items, to some of which I shall have presently to refer. I will now only mention that we pay £27,000 a year for the Colonial Office, £20,000 a year for ecclesiastical establishments in the West Indies, between £11,000 and £12,000 a year for the clergy of North America, and that last year we divided the diocese of Australia into four bishoprics, erected a bishopric at Cape Town, and conveyed the right reverend gentleman who held these sees to the colonies, at the expense of this country.

Extraordinary expenditure.

Lastly, under the head of extraordinary expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, I put down such items as the insurrection in Canada, for which, in the interval between 1838 and 1843, there were special grants to the amount of £2,096,000; as the Kaffir war, on account of which there is a special grant this year of £1,100,000, and for which we shall have probably to pay eight or nine hundred thousand pounds more; as the Maori war in New Zealand, which, at a low estimate, will cost half a million; as £214,000 for the payment of the debts of South Australia in 1842; as relief of sufferers by fire and other disasters in the colonies, for which we gave £50,000 in 1846; as the risk of non-payment of loans, such as £236,000 to the New Zealand Company, and £716,000 to the West Indian planters; and innumerable other items. On the average of the last ten years, £200,000 a year would have been wholly inadequate to cover the extraordinary expenditure by Great Britain on account of the colonies. I will put it down, however, at £200,000 a year, and I will omit all mention of the sums paid for emancipating the negroes in the colonies, and the civil expenditure on account of our attempt to suppress the slave trade, which many persons would charge to the account of extraordinary colonial expenditure.

Totals.

If the four sums which I have just mentioned be added together, namely, £2,500,000 for the army, including ordnance and commissariat, and £1,000,000 for the navy, £300,000 for civil services, and £200,000 for

extraordinary expenses, the total direct expenditure by Great Britain, on account of the colonies, would amount to at least four millions a year; and I am inclined to think that this is very much less than the actual annual cost of the colonies to Great Britain. Now, I beg the House to observe, that the declared value of British produce and manufactures exported to the colonies in the year 1844 was nine millions sterling, including the one million's worth of exports to Gibraltar, which are sent to Gibraltar to be smuggled into Spain. Therefore the expenditure of Great Britain on account of the colonies amounts to nine shillings in every pound's worth of its exports; or, in other words, for every pound's worth of goods that our merchants send to the colonies, the nation pays nine shillings; in fact, a large portion of our colonial trade consists of goods which are sent to defray the expenses of our establishments in the colonies. What are the advantages which we derive from our colonial possessions in return for this expenditure? Colonies are supposed to be useful either for political or commercial purposes, and with reference to these objects they should be divided into two classes, which should be considered separately; first, military stations, acquired chiefly for political purposes; secondly, colonies, properly so-called, supposed to be of value chiefly for commercial objects.

Our military stations are Heligoland, Gibraltar, Malta, the Ionian Islands, Bermuda, the stations on the west coast of Africa, St. Helena, the Cape of Good Hope, the Mauritius, Hong Kong, Labuan, and the Falkland Islands. What do these stations cost us? Of what use are they to this country? They are called the outposts of the British empire, and they are supposed to be useful in periods of war, for purposes of aggression. But it appears to me that most of them are so far removed from the centre of the empire, that in time of war they would be sources of weakness and not of strength; for they would compel us, contrary to every sound principle of warfare, to scatter instead of concentrating our

Military stations.

forces. Therefore, in the event of a really serious struggle, they would, like other outposts, in all probability, be abandoned to their fate. Moreover, it is evident that we can only retain possession of them as long as we have the dominion of the seas; but having the dominion of the seas, I cannot see why we should cover all of them with fortifications, and fill all of them with troops. I believe a wiser generation will hold wiser opinions with regard to the utility of these possessions. I will, however, for the present, suppose that some of them are of some use to the country, and proceed to tell the House what they cost us.

In Europe.

First, Gibraltar and Malta. In 1843–44 the total expenditure incurred by Great Britain on account of these stations was £366,000. About the same sum is expended upon them every year, for their garrisons consist of between 5000 and 6000 men (exclusive of artillery and engineers), and considerable sums are annually expended on building and repairing fortifications, naval works, etc. It is stated in the navy and ordnance estimates of this year, that the works now in progress in these two colonies will cost us £460,000. I will not ask whether they are worth the price we pay for them. But I do question the utility of protecting the Ionian Islands with 2500 troops, at a cost to this country of about £130,000 a year, which is somewhat more than the declared value of our exports to those islands in 1844. When England first became the protecting sovereign of the Ionian States, it was on the express condition that a portion, at least, of their military expense should be borne by the States; the sum to be paid was subsequently fixed at £35,000 a year. In 1842 the Ionian States were £122,000 in arrear, and I believe the arrears are still greater at present. We have spent large sums on military works at Corfu, and a grant of £12,873 is to be proposed this year to complete some of these works. Therefore our military stations in the Mediterranean require about 8000 troops, and they cost us at least half a million a year,

exclusive of any portion of the expense of the fleet in the Mediterranean. That fleet, on the average of the last five years, has consisted of twenty-three ships, with a complement of 5000 men, the expense of which, for wages, victuals, wear and tear, may be reckoned at half a million a year. The declared value of our exports to these stations is about £1,400,000, of which nearly a million is a smuggling trade through Gibraltar into Spain.

The Bermudas.

I next proceed to the Bermudas. Since the peace we have expended there upwards of £600,000 (exclusive of the cost of convict labour) on navy and ordnance works alone; and it is now estimated that to complete these works a further sum of £160,000 will be required. At the Bermudas there is a garrison of 1200 men, at a cost (exclusive of the expense for convicts) of about £90,000 a year. Now, what is the use of such costly establishments and fortifications on these worthless rocks? It is said that the Bermudas are useful as a means of aggression against the United States, and that we have garrisoned them and fortified them lest the United States should take possession of them. I believe the United States would not accept of them as a gift. They are chiefly used as a comfortable residence for the admiral on the North American station, for whom it is proposed to build a house at a cost of about £15,000.

St. Helena.

I next proceed to St. Helena, which cost us in civil and military expenditure about £40,000 a year, and to the colonies on the western coast of Africa, which in a similar manner cost us about £52,000 a year. These colonies are not, strictly speaking, military stations, nor are they of much commercial importance: their main object is to impede the slave trade. The fleet which we had last year upon this station consisted of twenty-four ships, with 259 guns, and a complement of 2781 men, and its cost was returned to Parliament for wages, victuals of crews, and wear and tear of ships, at £301,628 a year. Besides these sums we generally

expend about £80,000 a year on other matters connected with what is called the suppression of the slave trade. Therefore, at least half a million a year is the direct expenditure by Great Britain in the vain attempt to put a stop to that traffic. It may not be proper to include all this under the head of colonial expenditure; but, nevertheless, I may be permitted to express my belief that it is a most useless expenditure, and to recommend Parliament to abandon it, together with the colony of Sierra Leone, and the other stations on the west coast of Africa, and thus to save the country an outlay of at least £450,000 a year.

I now arrive at the colony of the Cape of Good Hope (the area of which is considerably larger than that of the United Kingdom). It may be looked upon as a commercial colony as well as a military station. As a commercial colony, it is not of much importance. In 1844, the declared value of our exports to it was only £458,000, and our imports from it were £258,000. The difference was made up by the military expenditure of Great Britain, which for 1843–44 amounted to £294,000, or more than 50 per cent. on our exports. In that year the number of troops in the colony was 2951 rank and file; last year, the number was at one time 5470 rank and file. This increase was in consequence of the Kaffir war; and for the same reason the fleet on this station was increased to nine ships, with a complement of 1700 men, which fleet must have cost this country at the rate of £170,000 a year. For that war we have already paid £1,100,000, and, in all probability, £800,000 or £900,000 more will be required to close the account. The House will be not astonished at this expenditure when it is informed, in the words of Sir Harry Smith, 'that in the last bit of a brush with a Kaffir chief called Sandhilli, £56,000 were expended in waggon-hire alone.' One word with regard to that war—for it is a striking instance of the pranks that colonial governors can play, of the little control that the Secretary of State for the Colonies can exercise

The Cape and the Kaffir wars.

over them, and of the danger to which this country is perpetually exposed, under the present colonial system, of having vast sums of money expended upon a worthless colony. The Cape of Good Hope is the Algeria of England. The Kaffir war which has just terminated was, I believe, the fourth in the last thirty years. The one which preceded it is said to have cost this country half a million sterling. All these wars have originated from nearly the same cause, namely, cattle-stealing along a frontier of upwards of 700 miles. Sometimes the Kaffirs stole, or were accused of stealing, the cattle of the colonists; the colonists retaliated; then they came to blows; blood was shed; the Colonial Government interfered; a large expenditure of public money ensued, to be paid for out of the Imperial treasury. This was the case in the last war. With regard to the origin of that war, there is a great difference of opinion. Some persons, apparently with great reason, ascribe it to the discontinuance of the system of Sir B. D'Urban, and the adoption of the mistaken policy of the missionaries; and they maintain that the war was inevitable, and only too long delayed by attempts to conciliate the Kaffirs. Other persons, with much show of reason, ascribe its origin and ill success to the haste and indiscretion of the governor, Sir P. Maitland. However this may be, the immediate cause of the war was this: a Kaffir on the frontier stole an axe. He was arrested and sent off to prison. On the road a rescue was attempted; a conflict ensued; on the one side a Kaffir, on the other side a Hottentot constable were slain, and the prisoner was rescued. Application was then made to certain Kaffir chiefs to give up the offenders. They refused, on the grounds that the colonial authorities were not entitled by treaty to send a Kaffir to prison for such a trifle as stealing an axe, and that the blood of the Hottentot had been paid for in the blood of the Kaffir first killed; and they entreated the governor not to be in haste with forces, but to have a talk about the matter and try to understand it. However, the governor at once hastened to the frontier; by his orders Kaffirland was invaded;

but every arrangement was so ill made that our troops were repulsed; twice our baggage-waggons were cut off; and the victorious Kaffirs, in their turn, invaded the colony. For months Sir P. Maitland lived in the bush, enduring, according to his own account, unheard-of hardships, when he was very properly superseded. Great was the amazement and indignation of his successor, Sir Henry Pottinger, at the state of affairs which he discovered in the colony. He declares that he cannot give an 'adequate idea of the confusion, unauthorized expense, and (as he believed) attendant peculation which had obtained.' In that peculation it is rumoured that men of high station were implicated. Numerous instances of reckless expenditure are stated in Sir Henry's despatches. One of a settlement on the Kat River, where the few inhabitants were, on the plea of defending the frontier, receiving rations at the rate of £21,000 a year. Another, in the vicinity of a station called Block Drift, where rations had been regularly given to a number of Kaffirs, who had been fighting against us. Sir Henry attempted to put a stop to these abuses; and the war seemed to be drawing to a close, when, unfortunately, fourteen goats were lost. They were tracked across the frontier into the territory of a Kaffir chief; he was required to restore them, and to give up the supposed thief. Twelve of the goats were immediately sent back, but the chief denied all knowledge of the other two, and of the thief, if there were one. Sir Henry Pottinger was not satisfied. He ordered a secret expedition into Kaffirland, to surprise the chief in question. The expedition, as usual, failed; the chief escaped; the troops retreated, after having killed a few Kaffirs, and carried off some head of cattle; and the war was kindled afresh. Throughout, Sir Henry Pottinger was thwarted by a divided command; and the greater portion of his troops were unsuited for the service which they had to perform. For instance, old officers of the Peninsula, accustomed to regular warfare, were intent upon displaying their strategic skill in a contest with savages; heavy dragoons, mounted upon chargers,

armed with rifles impossible to load on horseback; and English regiments, with their ordinary clothing and accoutrements, had, under the burning sun of Africa, to attack Kaffirs skulking in a bush all but impenetrable to Europeans. In such a war, seven British regiments, with artillery and engineers, were not a match for half the number of naked savages armed with assegais. The war would never have been brought to a close had it not been for the colonial corps, who, composed of Hottentots, led on by brave and energetic young English officers, followed the spoor of the Kaffirs, captured their cattle, and hunted them down like wolves. By these means Sir Henry Pottinger brought the war to a close just as he was succeeded by Sir H. Smith. Sir H. Smith, in addition to other marvellous feats, has made the Kaffir chiefs kiss his foot, has proclaimed himself their only Inkosi Inkulu (great chief), and has added, on the north of the colony, some 40,000 square miles (about the size of England) of as barren a desert (to use the words of the surveyor-general) as is to be found upon the earth's crust. Thus the loss of one axe and two goats on the frontier of the Cape of Good Hope has cost this country a couple of millions sterling. I attach no blame to Lord Grey or his predecessor on account of this war; it is clear from their despatches (I trust they will pardon me for saying it) that they were helpless and ignorant; and I believe Lord Grey was as much astonished as any man when he heard the amount of the bill to be paid. I warn the House, however, that, under the existing system, there is no reason whatever why, every four or five years, there should not be a similar war, with a similar bill to pay. For, with a frontier of about 700 miles in extent, causes of war with the neighbouring savages will perpetually recur. In the colony such a war is most popular, and is wished for on account of the lavish expenditure of Great Britain; and every effort is made to prolong its duration. There is but one means of securing our purses for the future, namely, by withdrawing our troops from the frontier, and letting the colonists distinctly understand that they must defend themselves, and pay the cost

of such defence. Then they will have the strongest motives to prevent the commencement, and to hasten the termination, of a Kaffir war. In return for so doing, they should receive free institutions, and have complete control over their own expenditure. Then a thousand troops would be a sufficient garrison for Cape Town; and, in ordinary years, there might be a saving at the Cape, in military expenditure alone, to the amount of at least £200,000 a year. If, however, public money is to be spent at the Cape of Good Hope, it would be better both for this country and for the colony that it should be spent on emigration. I believe that about £10 a head is sufficient to defray the expense of sending emigrants to that colony. Now, the direct military expenditure by Great Britain on account of the colonies is at the rate of £60 a year for each soldier in the colonies. Therefore, if we were to reduce our military force at the Cape by 1500 men, and were to send there, in their stead, 9000 emigrants a year, there would, in all probability, be a reduction in our expenditure on account of that colony; and the rapid increase of population would enable the colonists to guard their frontier effectually against the Kaffirs.

From the Cape of Good Hope I proceed to the Mauritius, which may likewise be looked upon, to a certain extent, as a commercial colony. The declared value of the exports to it of British produce was £285,000 in 1844. The whole expenditure by Great Britain, in 1843–44, on account of this colony, was £92,000; I should think that it costs somewhat more at present, for we have about 2000 troops at the Mauritius, and we are going to improve the defences of the island, at the estimated cost of £150,000. Where is the necessity for keeping this amount of military force at the Mauritius? Is it in order to keep down the planters? It is true they are discontented and overburdened by taxation; but the best plan would be to bestow upon them free institutions, and to give them complete control over their expenditure; then a thousand men (which was about the

Mauritius.

amount of the military force in that colony in 1826) would be an ample garrison.

From the Mauritius I should proceed to Hong Kong; but first, I will stop for a moment at Ceylon. As Ceylon is neither a military station nor a colony, properly so called, but is a subjugated territory of the same kind as our possessions in India, it appears to me that it would be better governed by the East India Company than by the Colonial Office, in which case we should have nothing to pay for the troops in that island. In 1843–44 the military expenditure by Great Britain amounted to £110,000, in addition to a military expenditure by the colony of nearly £70,000. At present the military force in Ceylon consists of 4000 troops, including colonial corps. Now, £110,000 a year is a heavy price to pay for a colony, the declared value of our exports to which did not exceed £240,000 in 1844; it is true, however, that the import trade from Ceylon, especially of coffee, is rapidly increasing in value.

Ceylon.

I now arrive at Hong Kong. From the 1st of May, 1841, when we took possession of that island, up to the 30th September, 1846, we have expended upon it £314,000, exclusive of the sums derived from the local revenue. I find in the Navy, Ordnance, Commissariat, and Miscellaneous Estimates for this year, that Hong Kong appears under sixteen different heads, for sums amounting in all to £94,514; to which must be added the expense of paying, clothing, etc., of 1200 troops, which must amount to at least £40,000 a year. Therefore Hong Kong bids fair to be a costly colony, as, indeed, it ought to be, when the salary of the governor is £6000 a year. As the East India Company has a fleet of its own to defend its own possessions, the greater portion of this expenditure is on account of the trade with China, which, on the average of the last four years, did not exceed £2,000,000 a year in British produce and manufactures.

Hong Kong.

Next, I have to inform the House that Labuan appears

this year for the first time in our estimates [Mr. HUME: 'Ha, ha,' laughter], as yet only in the miscellaneous estimates for the sum of £9827, £2000 of which is the salary of his Excellency the Rajah Brooke, of Sarawak [Mr. HUME: 'Ha, ha,' laughter], to whose dominions in Borneo we have this year appointed a consul at a salary of £500 a year. Now, as in these matters the first step is all the difficulty, we may expect in a year or two to see Labuan, Sarawak, and perhaps in their train some half-dozen other Borneon principalities, holding conspicuous places in the Army, Navy, Ordnance, as well as Miscellaneous Estimates. Then we shall build barracks and fortifications, and garrison them with a few troops. The troops will create a demand for a small quantity of British produce and manufactures. To protect the trade thus arising, a ship or two of war will be stationed in the neighbourhood. Thus, in proportion to the increase of the public expenditure will be the increase of the traffic, till at length we shall be informed that the British merchant is carrying a flourishing commerce with these settlements, at the usual cost to the nation, of ten shillings in every pound sterling of her exports. This is the most approved Colonial Office fashion of colonizing and creating a colonial trade, very different from the old English mode.

Labuan, etc.

I will now conclude the catalogue of the military stations with the Falkland Islands. On that dreary, desolate, and windy spot, where neither corn nor trees can grow, long wisely abandoned by us, we have, since 1841, expended upwards of £35,000; we have a civil establishment there at the cost of £5000 a year; a governor who has erected barracks and other 'necessary' buildings, well loop-holed for musketry; and being hard up for cash, he issued a paper currency, not, however, with the approbation of the Colonial Office.

Falkland Islands.

Thus it appears that our twelve military stations and Ceylon contain about 22,000 troops; and that portion of their civil and military expenditure which is defrayed by Great Britain

amounts to at least £1,300,000 a year, exclusive of extraordinary expenditure for Kaffir wars, etc., which, on the average of the last ten years, may be put down at much more than £100,000 a year. To these sums must be added a portion of the cost of the four large fleets which are stationed at or in the vicinity of the military stations; namely, on the Mediterranean, the African, the Cape, and the Chinese stations. These fleets consist at present of 93 ships, with a complement of 18,000 men, and must cost a million and a half a year for wages and victuals of crews, and wear and tear of vessels.

Total cost of military stations.

What I propose to the House is this: to withdraw our military protection from the Ionian States; to dispense with our stations and fleet on the west coast of Africa; to reduce our establishments at the Cape and the Mauritius, and to bestow on these colonies free institutions; to transfer Ceylon to the East India Company; to keep a sharp watch over the expenditure for Hong Kong, Labuan, and Sarawak; and to acknowledge the claim of Buenos Ayres to the Falkland Islands. Then 10,000 men, instead of 22,000, would be sufficient to garrison the military stations in the following manner: 6000 for Malta and Gibraltar; 4000 for Bermuda, the Cape, the Mauritius, and Hong Kong. If this were done, there would be a reduction in military and naval expenditure to the amount of at least a million a year for the military stations alone.

Proposed economies.

I now come to the colonies, properly so called, which have been planted in North America, the West Indies, and Australasia. For what purposes, I ask, were colonies originally planted by England? What benefit does this country derive from her dominion over her colonies? Our ancestors would have answered these questions in the following manner. They would have told us how a little more than two centuries ago some of the inhabitants of this island, being uneasy at home, had migrated to America; they were prudent and

The colonies proper, and the old system of colonial monopoly.

energetic men, of the true Anglo-Saxon breed, which is best fitted to wage war with the savage and the forest; and being left alone, they flourished; and in the course of a few years, without costing one farthing to the country, they became a numerous and a thriving people. Then the shopkeepers and other traders of England wished to secure their custom, and, according to the notions of the day, they petitioned Parliament that the colonists should be confined to the English shop; first, for buying all the goods they wanted in Europe; secondly, for selling all such parts of their colonial produce as the English traders might find it convenient to buy. Parliament acceded to this request. Thence the old system of colonial monopoly, which was the sole end and aim of the dominion which England assumed over her colonies. To maintain that monopoly and that dominion, vast sums were expended, costly wars were waged, and huge military and naval establishments were kept up; but it was always supposed that the expense thus incurred was repaid by the benefits derived from the monopoly of the colonial trade. I will not attempt to strike the balance of past profit or loss. It is evident, however, that with the abandonment of colonial monopoly, the arguments in favour of colonial dominion, which were derived from that monopoly, must likewise be abandoned. Now to monopoly free trade has succeeded, and the last relic of the colonial system, in the shape of the navigation laws, is about to perish. Our colonies are free to trade with whom they will, and in what manner they will. Therefore they will only trade with us when they can do so more profitably with us than with other countries. Therefore, as far as trade is concerned, the colonies are become virtually independent States, except that they may not enact laws to restrain their inhabitants from buying from us, or selling to us, if it be for their interest so to do. It is evident, however, that if the colonies were independent States, they never would be so foolish as to prevent their inhabitants from selling to us; but it may be said that they might be so foolish as to prevent their inhabitants from buying from us. If

this be all the mischief which, as far as trade is concerned, is to be apprehended from the colonies becoming independent States, then it follows that all the benefit which, as far as trade is concerned, we derive from the sums which we expend on colonial dominion, consists in the power which we thereby possess of averting the possibility of the colonies enacting hostile tariffs against our produce and manufactures. The amount of this benefit must evidently depend upon the value of our export trade to the colonies. Now, the declared value of the export of British produce and manufactures to the North American, West Indian, and Australasian colonies for the year 1844 (the last complete return) was about £6,000,000; the direct expenditure by Great Britain, on account of those colonies, cannot be less than £2,000,000 sterling a year. I ask, is it worth our while to spend a couple of millions a year to guard against the possibility of a diminution in an export trade of £6,000,000 a year? I put this question to any mercantile man: Would it be worth his while to pay 6*s.* 8*d.* in the pound on the value of his goods, to secure that those goods shall freely compete with the goods of other nations in the markets of the North American, West Indian, and Australasian colonies? And if it be not worth his while, is it worth our while to pay it for him? This is undoubtedly a great and marvellous empire, in many respects unparalleled in history, but in no respect more marvellous than with reference to its colonies. Every other nation has attempted, in some shape or form, to draw tribute from its colonies; but England, on the contrary, has paid tribute to her colonies. She has created and maintained, at an enormous expense, the extensive colonial empire for the sole purpose of buying customers for her shopkeepers. This (as Adam Smith has justly observed) was the project, not of a nation of shopkeepers, but of a Government influenced by shopkeepers. It may be said that I have omitted to consider the value of the import trade from the colonies, which is equal to the value of the export trade; but no one fears that the colonies would, if they became independent States, refuse to

sell to us; they would only be too happy so to do. We do not, therefore, require colonial dominion in order to buy from them; and, in fact, we do not really require colonial dominion even to sell to them; for if we buy from them, it would be for their interest to receive payment in our produce and manufactures, if cheaper than those of other countries, and that interest would in the long run prevail. It does appear to me, therefore, to be a manifest absurdity to spend vast sums of money on colonial dominion, for the purpose of securing free trade with the colonies. I now ask, is this large colonial expenditure by Great Britain necessary in order to maintain the connexion between Great Britain and her colonies, which shall secure free trade between them, and the other benefits which I do believe Great Britain may derive from her colonies? I must be permitted to consider these questions separately with regard to each of the three great divisions of the colonies.

In the North American colonies, the military force amounts to about 9000 men. The military expenditure by Great Britain for the year 1843–44, was £698,000. The civil expenditure by Great Britain for the same year was £34,000; this sum included an annual charge of about £12,000 for the North American clergy, and of about £15,000 for the Indian department. The whole direct expenditure by Great Britain for that year was returned to Parliament at £736,691. To this sum must be added a portion of the expense of the packet service, which costs £145,000 a year; and a portion of the expense of the fleet on the North American and West Indian station, which, on the average of the last ten years, must have cost £300,000 a year. When it is remembered that, in addition to these sums, Parliament specially granted, in the interval between 1838 and 1843, £2,096,046 on account of the insurrection in Canada; in 1846, £50,000 to sufferers by fire at Quebec and St. John's; and in other years, smaller sums on account of the Rideau Canal, canal communication in Canada; militia and volunteers in Canada, etc., etc., which in the interval between 1835 and

The North American colonies.

1847, amounted to £193,174, it follows that the North American colonies have cost Great Britain at the rate of at least a million sterling a year during the last ten years, and at present they must cost at least £800,000 a year. Now, on the average of the five years ending with 1844, the declared value of British produce and manufactures exported to the North American colonies was £2,600,000 a year. Is it worth our while to pay £800,000 a year, that is, 30 per cent. on these exports, to guard against the possibility of some diminution in that trade? For what purpose do we keep 9000 troops in North America? Is it to protect the colonists against the United States? But if they are loyal at heart, they are strong enough to protect themselves; if they are disloyal, twice 9000 men will not keep them down. But suppose they were to separate from us, and to form independent States, or even to join the United States, would they not become more profitable as colonies than they are at present? The United States are, in the strict signification of the word, still colonies of Great Britain, as Carthage was a colony of Tyre, and the cities of Ionia and Sicily were colonies of Greece; for the word colony does not necessarily imply dependency, but merely a community composed of persons who have removed from one country and settled in another, for the purpose of cultivating it. Now, our colonies (as I will term them) of the United States are in every point of view more useful to us than all our other colonies put together. In 1844, we exported to the United States produce and manufactures to the value of £8,000,000; an amount equal to the whole of our real export trade to all our colonial dominions, which we govern at a cost of £4,000,000 a year; while the United States cost us for consular and diplomatic services not more than £15,000 a year; and not one ship of war is required to protect our trade with the United States—in fact, a British ship of war is very rarely seen off the coast of the United States. Again, more emigrants go directly from this country to the United States than to all our other colonies put

together. In the ten last years, according to the returns of the Emigration Commissioners, 1,042,000 emigrants left this country, of which number 552,000 went directly to the United States; how many went indirectly through Canada I cannot undertake to say. Last year, 251,000 persons emigrated from Great Britain to North America, 142,000 of whom went directly to the United States, the remaining 109,000 to the colonies. At present, it is considered that colonies are chiefly useful as affording markets for our produce, and outlets for our population. It is evident that in both these respects, independent colonies are as useful as dependent ones. I do not, however, propose to abandon the North American colonies; but if we are compelled to choose between the alternative of the continuation of the present vast expenditure and that of abandoning these colonies, it is evident that the latter alternative would be the more profitable one in an economical point of view. But I maintain, that if we govern our North American colonies as we ought to govern them, follow out rigorously the principle of responsible government, and leave them to manage their own affairs, uncontrolled by the Colonial Office, we may with safety diminish our military force and expenditure, and they will willingly continue to be our fellow-subjects.

In the West Indies the military force amounts to about 6000 men. In the year 1843–44, the military expenditure was £513,386; the civil expenditure was £74,462. This civil expenditure consists of an annual charge of £20,300 for ecclesiastical establishments; of about £18,000 for the salaries of governors; and of about £35,000 for the salaries of stipendiary magistrates. The total amount of the direct expenditure incurred by Great Britain on account of these colonies for 1843–44, has been returned at £593,834, or within a trifle of what it was in 1835–36. But in order to form a fair estimate of the whole cost of these colonies, we should add to this direct expenditure a portion of the expense of the fleet on the North American and West Indian station,

The West Indies.

which fleet, as I have already stated, must cost the country at least £300,000 a year; a portion likewise of the expense of the packet service to and from the West Indies, which is contracted for at £240,000 a year; likewise something on account of the risk of the non-repayment of loans, such as £50,000 this year on account of the hurricane in Tobago; £166,000 which the Colonial Office, somewhat usurping the ordinary functions of Parliament, promised without consulting Parliament to British Guiana and Trinidad in February last; and the £50,000 with which the noble lord the member for the city of London has vainly hoped to appease the West Indian interest. How much of these loans will ever be repaid? And we must likewise add the cost of landing captured negroes free of charge in the West Indies; I have already mentioned the cost of capturing them. I am afraid, therefore, that our West Indian colonies will in future cost this country directly much more than £700,000 a year, which is just one-fourth of the declared value of our annual exports to these colonies, on the average of five years ending 1844. And that export trade is decreasing, and will decrease; for there can be no doubt that the value of West Indian property has greatly diminished. I will not trespass on the patience of the House by making any observations on the state of the West Indies, as that subject was so fully discussed a short time ago. I will merely remark, that some West Indian proprietors have said that we must either restore the value of their property by protecting their sugar, or they will throw off our dominion. Now, if we choose between these alternatives there can be little doubt which would be the cheaper; for if we were to abandon those colonies, there would be a direct saving of £700,000 a year, and no protecting duty on sugar. In fact, if we were to make them a present of ten millions sterling, on condition of their becoming independent States, we should be gainers thereby to the amount of at least £350,000 a year. Though I utterly disbelieve that the West Indian colonies can ever be of the slightest value to this country,

as colonies, for their climate is quite unsuited to our race, and they will, in all probability, become negro islands, like Haiti; though they have been the most costly, the most worthless, and the worst managed of our colonies—a perpetual drain on the pockets of the people of England—yet I do not propose to abandon them, except at the express wish of the colonists. I should merely propose to reduce our military force to half its present amount, and to effect a saving of about £300,000 a year.

In the Australian colonies, including New Zealand, the number of troops must at present be about 5000 men; and the military expenditure by Great Britain must amount to about £27 0,000 a year. The civil expenditure by Great Britain for this year, according to the miscellaneous estimates, will be about £30,000. Therefore, the direct expenditure by Great Britain on account of these colonies must amount to at least £300,000 a year, exclusive of such items as £15,402 for the abandonment of Lord Stanley's colony of North Australia; £214,936, which we first lent, and then gave, in consequence of Colonel Gawler's extravagances in South Australia; and I know not how much for the follies of Captains Hobson and Fitzroy in New Zealand, who involved us in a war with the natives, which is still going on. The bill has not yet been sent in. Will £500,000 cover it? I am afraid not; for portions of three regiments are quartered in that colony; and there are three or four ships of war, with a complement of about 800 men, stationed off the coast; these ships must cost for wages, provisions, wear and tear, etc., about £80,000 a year. Now, the declared value of our exports to the Australian colonies, on the average of the five years ending 1844, was only £1,000,000 a year; putting down our expenditure only at £300,000 a year, that expenditure would amount to 30 per cent. on the value of our exports. Now, it is certain that not one single soldier is required in Australia except to keep the convicts in order; nor would one soldier have been required in New Zealand had

Australia and New Zealand.

it not been for the preposterous mismanagement of that colony by the Colonial Office. Supposing, however, that 2000 men were required for the convict service in Van Diemen's Land, and 1000 men for New Zealand, the military force in the Australian colonies might be reduced to 3000 men.

Thus it appears that the military force in the North American, West Indian, and Australian colonies amount to about 20,000 men, and the direct expenditure by Great Britain, on account of these colonies, to about £2,000,000 a year. I should propose to reduce that force to 10,000 men, whereof 4000 men would be sufficient for North America, 3000 for the West Indies, and 3000 for Australia; and then, in my opinion, less than £1,000,000 a year would suffice to defray the expenses of those colonies to Great Britain.

Therefore, the whole reduction which I should propose at present to make in that portion of the colonial expenditure which is defrayed by Great Britain is £2,000,000 a year. I should effect that saving partly by a reduction of 22,000 men in the military force in the colonies; partly by a reduction of the naval and civil expenditure on account of the colonies; and partly by removing the causes which have led to Canadian rebellions, Kaffir and New Zealand wars, and the like. If this were accomplished, still, however, the colonies would continue to cost the large sum of £2,000,000 a year; but I believe that a further reduction might ultimately be made on account of the commercial colonies; indeed, they might cost us next to nothing, if we gave them complete control over their own affairs, on condition that they should pay their own expenses. The military stations, however, must always be a source of great expense, and if we retain them we must be content to pay dearly for our whistle.

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I shall now proceed to the consideration of that portion of the colonial expenditure of the British Empire which is defrayed by the colonies themselves. A return has just been presented to the House of that expenditure for the last year in

which it could be made up. In most instances it is for the year 1845; it is not materially different from the returns for previous years; I may, therefore, without any considerable inaccuracy, assume that it represents the ordinary annual expenditure by the colonies, and especially for the year 1845. From that return it appears that the total expenditure by all the colonies (excepting Ceylon and the stations on the west coast of Africa, for reasons which I will presently state; and likewise the Ionian Islands, from which there was no return), was about £3,350,000 for the year 1845. The population of these colonies was about 3,400,000; therefore the annual expenditure was at the rate of 19*s.* 8*d.* per head of the population. The rate of expenditure, however, varies considerably in different colonies, according to the form of local government. It is greater or less, according as the colonists have less or more control over their own expenses. This is a most important fact, to which I wish to call the special attention of the House. I have instituted a comparison between the rate of expenditure of those colonies which have, and those which have not, representative assemblies. From that comparison I have omitted Ceylon; because Ceylon is not a colony properly so called, but belongs to the class of our Indian possessions, and it is evident that a rate of expenditure which might be considered trifling for a population composed chiefly of Europeans, might be excessive for a population of the Cingalese and Veddahs of Ceylon. I have likewise omitted the colonies on the west coast of Africa; for there is no account of their population on which any reliance can be placed; and the Ionian Islands have also been omitted, because, as I have already said, their expenditure has not been returned to Parliament in the return in question. With these omissions, I find that the rate of expenditure of the colonies with representative assemblies is less than one-half of the rate of the expenditure of the colonies without representative assemblies. The colonies with representative assemblies have

Colonial self-government and rates of expenditure.

a population of about 2,580,000, and their expenditure in 1846 was £1,930,000, or at the rate of 14*s.* 11*d.* per head of their population. On the other hand, the population of the colonies, without representative assemblies, was about 820,000, and their expenditure in 1845 was £1,420,000, or at the rate of £1 14*s.* a head of their population, or 18*s.* 7*d.* a head more than in the colonies with representative assemblies. I am convinced that this great increase of the rate of expenditure in the Crown colonies is mainly to be attributed to the want of self-government; for it is most apparent when the rate of expenditure in each class of colonies is examined and considered separately.

The rate of expenditure is the lowest in the North American colonies, where there is the greatest amount of self-government. In fact, since the last insurrection in Canada, and the establishment of the doctrine of responsible government, Canada has become, in most respects, an independent State, except as far as the civil list is concerned, and except that it is now and then subjected to some mischievous and foolish interference on the part of the Colonial Office. Now the expenditure of the North American colonies in 1845 was £1,134,000, their population was 1,700,000; therefore the rate of expenditure was 13*s.* 4*d.* per head of the population, or 1*s.* 7*d.* less than the average rate of the colonies with representative assemblies. But it should be remarked, that of the £1,134,000 expended in 1845 by the North American colonies £500,000 was an extraordinary expenditure by Canada, on account of new works and buildings, a large portion of which was defrayed by a loan. If a portion of this loan be omitted, as it ought to be, from the annual expenditure, then the rate of expenditure by the North American colonies for the year 1845 would have been nearly the same as it was for the year 1842, when it amounted to about 9*s.* a head of the population. Though this rate of expenditure is low, as compared with other colonies, yet it is about thirty per cent. higher than that of the United States for similar purposes. The difference mainly

arises from the high scale of salaries paid to the higher functionaries in the North American colonies. Generally speaking, those functionaries receive from three to four times the amount of the salaries of similar functionaries in the United States. For instance, in the Canadas, with a population of 1,200,000, the governor is paid £7000 a year; in the United States, the President has only £5000 a year, and no governor has more than £1200 a year; in the State of New York, with a population of 2,600,000, the governor only receives £800 a year. Again, the chief justices of Upper and Lower Canada are paid £1500 a year each, while the chancellor and chief justices of the State of New York receive only £800 a-year each. The puisne judges of Canada receive £1000 a year each; those of New York only £200 a year each. The governor of Nova Scotia is paid £3500 a year; the governors of New Brunswick and Newfoundland are paid £3000 a year each. In Massachusetts, with a population much larger than that of the three last colonies added together, the salary of the governor is only £500 a year. In fact, the four North American colonies which I have just mentioned, pay £2500 a year more for the salaries of their four governors, than the thirty states of the Union do for their thirty governors. Now in the colonies, the salaries are fixed by the various civil lists. These civil lists, being removed for a series of years from the control of the representative assemblies, are perpetual causes of quarrelling and discontent; and there is always a dispute going on between the Colonial Office and some colony or other on this subject, which frequently leads to the most unpleasant results. For instance, the dispute about the civil list of Canada was one of the causes which ultimately lead to the insurrection in that colony; and at present the Colonial Office is involved in a civil list quarrel with British Guiana. In all these quarrels, the object of the office is to keep up the pay of its functionaries, and the object of the colonists is a reduction of expenditure. There can be no doubt that the salaries of the higher

Salaries of officials in North America.

functionaries in the colonies are excessive, as compared to the standard of the United States, which is the usual standard of comparison in the colonies. For the salaries of the governors of the thirty states of the Union amount in all to but £14,000 a year; therefore the average is £460 a year for the salary of each governor. Now there are eighteen British colonies which pay for their own governors; their salaries amount in all to £72,000 a year; therefore the average is £4000 a year for the salary of each of these governors, or nearly nine times the rate of pay in the United States. In fact, nine out of the eighteen governors in question receive as much as, or more than, the President of the United States. For instance, the governors of Canada, the Mauritius, and Ceylon, receive £7000 a year each; the governor of Jamaica has £6500 a year, and the governors of Gibraltar, Malta, the Ionian Isles, the Cape of Good Hope, and New South Wales, have £5000 a year each. I do not think this rate of pay is too high for noble lords and other gentlemen of rank and connection, when they undertake the duties of governors of the colonies; but if we are determined to employ such persons in the colonies, we ought to pay for them ourselves. On the other hand, if we insist upon the colonies paying their governors, it appears to me that, with the exception of the military stations, we should permit the colonies to elect their own governors and other functionaries, and to pay them what salaries they think fit. Such was, in olden times, the constitution of our colonies of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts; and the honour and distinction attached to the office of governor would induce the best men in the colonies to serve for moderate salaries. If, however, the colonists were to choose, in any particular case, a person unfit to be a governor, they would be the sufferers; they would have no one but themselves to blame; but, as I will presently show, it would be difficult for them to make a worse choice than the Colonial Office generally makes.

To return to the question of the comparative rates of

expenditure in those colonies which have, and those colonies which have not, representative governments. In the West Indies the colonies with representative assemblies are Jamaica, the Leward Islands, the Windward Islands (with the exception of St. Lucia), and the Bahamas. Their population is about 700,000; their expenditure in 1845 was £450,000, or at the rate of 12*s.* 10*d.* per head of their population; the rate of Jamaica was 13*s.* Now compare this rate with that of the West Indian colonies without representative governments, namely, St. Lucia, Honduras, Trinidad, and British Guiana (the combined court of which cannot with any propriety be termed a representative assembly); their population is about 190,000; their expenditure, exclusive of the cost of immigration, was £284,000, or at the rate of £1 9*s.* a head, or more than twice as much as that of the West Indian colonies which have representative assemblies. The salaries of the higher functionaries in the West Indian colonies are all excessive, as compared with the standard of the United States. Twelve governors and lieutenant-governors receive £29,000 a year, £16,000 of which are paid by the colonists to five governors. As I have already observed, the Colonial Office is involved in a civil list dispute with British Guiana. In consequence of the distressed condition of that colony, at the close of last year the elective members of the Court of Policy proposed a reduction of 25 per cent. upon all salaries above 700 dollars a year. The Colonial Office refused to accede to this proposal; and the governor carried the estimates for the year in the Court of Policy by the exercise of his double vote. The Combined Court then refused to vote the supplies for the period required by the governor. The Colonial Office has retaliated upon them for this conduct by stopping immigration to British Guiana, and by refusing the usual licences to carry liberated negroes from Sierra Leone to that colony. This unexpected proceeding has occasioned considerable inconvenience and loss to various shipowners in this country, who complain that no reliance can be placed

West Indies.

upon the Colonial Office with its perpetually shifting regulations.

The Cape of Good Hope and the Mauritius have each of them about the same population, namely, 160,000, and being Crown colonies, their rate of expenditure is about the same as that of the Crown colonies of the West Indies, namely, £1 7*s.* a head; they are grievously taxed, especially the Mauritius. As I have already said, the Governor of the Mauritius has £7000 a year, and the Governor of the Cape has as much as the President of the United States.

Cape and Mauritius.

It may be said that the rate of expenditure is higher in the Crown colonies, because, generally speaking, those colonies are more thinly peopled than the colonies with representative assemblies. It is perfectly true that, everything else being the same, the rate of expenditure in a thinly peopled territory will generally exceed that of a thickly peopled one. But the Crown colony of the Mauritius is four times as densely peopled as Jamaica, yet the rate of expenditure in Jamaica per head of the population is less than one-half of what it is in the Mauritius. Again, the Crown colony of Malta is one of the most densely peopled spots on the face of the earth, yet the rate of expenditure is 16*s.* 6*d.* a head of the population, or twenty per cent. more than that of the plantations in the West Indies; or nearly double the ordinary rate of expenditure in the thinly peopled North American colonies. Again, Malta is more than twice as thickly populated as the Ionian States, but those states have a certain amount of self-government, and their rate of expenditure in 1840 (the last return which I have been able to get at) was 14*s.* 3*d.* a head, or 2*s.* 3*d.* a head less than that of Malta.

The Crown colonies.

Ceylon is the only apparent exception to the rule, that the expenditure of colonies governed by the Colonial Office is greater than that of self-governed colonies. According to Sir Emerson Tennent, the population of Ceylon in 1846 must

have amounted to 1,500,000, and the expenditure in that year was £498,000, or at the rate of 6*s.* 7*d.* a head of the population. It is true this rate of expenditure is lower than that of any other colony, yet I believe it will be found to be extravagant when the nature of the population is considered; for it ought to be compared with that of the territories governed by the East India Company, which are inhabited by an analogous population, but are locally governed by men carefully selected on account of their special aptitude. The population of those territories is said to be about 93,000,000, and the expenditure on the average of the five years ending 1844 was £20,000,000 sterling, therefore at the rate of 4*s.* 3*d.* a head of the population, or one-third less than that of Ceylon. There can be no doubt that if Ceylon were transferred, as I propose, to the East India Company, it would be more economically governed than it is by the Colonial Office.

Lastly, with regard to the Australian colonies. New South Wales is the only one which has a representative assembly of any kind. It commenced its existence in 1843, and immediately caused an extraordinary diminution in the expenditure. In 1841 the free population of New South Wales amounted to about 102,000, and the ordinary expenditure, exclusive of immigration, was £350,000, or at the enormous rate of £3 4*s.* a head of the population. In 1843 the Representative Assembly at once diminished the expenditure for the subsequent year by £60,000; and in 1846, when the free population amounted to 178,000, the expenditure was only £254,000, or at the rate of £1 8*s.* a head of the population. This extraordinary reduction in the rate of expenditure may be attributed, to a certain extent, to immigration; but the reduction in the positive amount of expenditure can be distinctly traced to the commencement of local self-government in 1843.

Expenditure of Australian colonies compared.

Compare the rate of expenditure of New South Wales with that of the neighbouring colony of Van Diemen's Land, which has in vain petitioned for a representative assembly.

In 1842 the free population of that colony amounted to 37,000, and on the average of the four years ending with 1844, the expenditure, exclusive of immigration, was £161,000, or at the enormous rate of £4 6*s*. a head. The rate of expenditure was not very different from that of the kindred colony of New South Wales prior to the establishment of representative government; but it was more than three times that of New South Wales after the establishment of a representative government. It must, however, be acknowledged that the difference in the rate of expenditure of the two colonies may be attributed in part, though certainly not altogether, to the abolition of transportation to New South Wales, and to its continuance, in its worst form, to Van Diemen's Land. The House may remember the appalling description which was given last year of the loathsome moral state of the convict population of that colony and its dependency, Norfolk Island; of their hideous crimes; of their frightful diseases; and of their atrocious murders. It was shown that the unhappy state of that colony was brought about partly by the negligence of the then Secretary of State for the colonies, Lord Stanley; partly by the mismanagement of the then Governor of Van Diemen's Land, Sir Eardly Wilmott; and partly by the misconduct of the then commandant of Norfolk Island, Major Childs. In consequence of these horrid disclosures, it was announced last year to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, Sir W. Denison, that it was the intention of the Government that transportation should be discontinued altogether, and that announcement was received with great satisfaction in the colony. Unfortunately, it now appears that transportation is to be renewed to Van Diemen's Land, though in a mitigated form. The colonists will be bitterly disappointed and exasperated when they receive this information. At present they are discontented; for to meet the vast expenditure of the colony, taxes have been imposed which the judges have pronounced to be illegal; and one of the judges so deciding has been removed by the Governor,

as the colonists believe, in consequence of his decision; a belief which, from the statements made to the House by the honourable gentleman the Under Secretary of State for the colonies, appears to be unfounded. The colonists, however, will have every reason to be dissatisfied with the renewal of transportation, which will mar their prospects, and make them for ever the plague-spot and reproach of Australasia.

In the other Australian colonies which have not representative governments, I am unable to state with accuracy the rate of expenditure per head of the population. In South Australia, at one time, it exceeded £10 a head per annum; and the colony became utterly bankrupt through the extravagance of its governor, Colonel Gawler. We had to liquidate its debts, partly by a gift in 1842 to the amount of £214,936, and by a loan of £85,000. This loan will be repaid, because South Australia is becoming rich, in consequence of the discovery of mines. With regard to these mines, it is said that the Colonial Office has created great dissatisfaction in this colony by reserving a royalty of one-fifteenth of their gross produce. The House is probably not aware that almost every year the Colonial Office makes some change in the management of the waste lands of the Australian colonies, which affects, to a greater or less extent, the value of all landed property in those colonies. For instance, with reference to minerals. Originally all minerals were reserved to the Crown, and only the surface of the soil was conveyed to the purchaser. In one instance, however, Lord Bathurst, when Secretary of State for the Colonies, gave all the coal in New South Wales to one company. In consequence of these reservations, no one had any interest in searching for or in discovering mines, therefore no mines were discovered, or, if discovered, they were carefully concealed. When, however, the noble lord the member for the city of London became Secretary of State for the Colonies, he, with his usual good sense, at once perceived the impolicy of such reservations, and under his rule all

minerals were conveyed to the purchaser of the soil. Then mines were discovered, especially in South Australia; and then, to the astonishment of most persons, the Colonial Office determined upon reserving a royalty upon all future mines. Well, it matters not who did it. The consequence is, that the previously discovered mines, which are nearer the coast, and therefore can be worked with less expense, will have to pay nothing; whilst the subsequently discovered mines, which are further from the coast, and therefore more expensive to work, will have to pay a royalty of $6\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. on their gross produce. Such a measure is bad on economical grounds, and bad also in policy; for sound policy requires that this country should interfere as little as possible in the internal affairs of its colonies, and, above all, as little as possible with their pockets. The policy of the noble lord (the member for the city of London) was the right and statesmanlike one; —sell your land to the colonists and have done with it. Signeuries and royalties are relics of feudalism, wholly unsuited to colonies. Their establishment is another instance of the utter ignorance of men and things which the Colonial Office generally displays in its administration of the colonies; and, to crown the absurdity, the emigration commissioners report that these royalties are, at present, not worth collecting in South Australia.

Swan River, *alias* Western Australia, has a delicious climate, much good land, plenty of coal, and is well situated for commerce; it might have proved a flourishing colony by this time, but it was overlaid at its birth by the Colonial Office. Its expenditure exceeds its income; and we have to pay seven or eight thousand pounds a year for its civil government.

Expenditure in New Zealand.

Lastly, New Zealand. I do not know the rate of expenditure per head of the population of that colony. Its expenditure, however, far exceeds its income. We annually vote between twenty and thirty thousand pounds a year for its civil government, exclusive

of the bill which we shall have to pay for Maori wars. In the course of the last two years, we have voted that £236,000 shall be lent to the New Zealand Company, which I hope will be repaid some day or other. In that colony, what with imbecile governors in the beginning, what with constitutions proclaimed and suspended, what with quarrels with the natives, what with missionaries and land-sharks, there has been a state of the most extraordinary confusion; yet, I believe, through the indomitable energy of our race, New Zealand will ultimately become a flourishing colony, the Britain of the Southern Seas. The House may remember that in 1846 the Colonial Office imagined a nondescript constitution for New Zealand, and sent it off post-haste to that colony. It was to divide New Zealand into two provinces—New Ulster and New Munster. Each was to have a representative assembly. When the constitution arrived, Governor Grey refused to bestow it on New Ulster, on the grounds that it would enable the British population to legislate for and tax the natives. Therefore Governor Grey suspended the constitution of New Ulster till he could receive further instructions; but he expressed his opinions in very strong terms that the inhabitants of New Munster were fit for a constitution. When this intelligence reached the Colonial Office, Lord Grey immediately proposed to Parliament a Bill (which was passed about three or four months ago) to suspend the constitution of both provinces. Now I infer, from late accounts from the colonies, that New Munster has obtained its constitution; and perhaps its representatives will be assembled, and will be hard at work legislating, when orders will arrive from England to suspend their constitution, and to dismiss them with ignominy. A curious farce is the history of the management of this colony by the Colonial Office. This same nondescript New Zealand constitution was sent by the Colonial Office to New South Wales for the colonists to inspect, and to see how they would like a similar one. They have rejected it with scorn and contempt. I am afraid, sir,

that the present Secretary of State for the Colonies, notwithstanding his very great abilities, will not be renowned in future history as either the Solon or Lycurgus of Australia.

Conclusions.

I think I have sufficiently established my position that, in every portion of the globe, the British colonies are more economically and better governed in proportion as they are self-governed. In North America the various states of the Union govern themselves twenty-five per cent. cheaper than the Canadas do, which are to a certain extent under the control of the Colonial Office. In the West Indies the Crown colonies, which are governed by the Colonial Office, are twice as heavily taxed as the plantations; and in Australia, and in the Mediterranean, the same rule holds good. These facts justify the conclusion at which I now arrive, that the greater the amount of local self-government, and the less the Colonial Office interferes in the internal affairs of the colonies, the more economically and the better the colonies will be governed. In the course of the last ten years petitions, complaining of Colonial Office government, and praying for representative government, have been presented from the Cape of Good Hope, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, Western Australia, South Australia, New Zealand, British Guiana, Trinidad, St. Lucia, and Malta. The prayer of only one of these petitions has been acceded to. New South Wales has obtained a mongrel form of representative government, which must soon be amended, though not in the fashion proposed by the Colonial Office. All the other petitions have been rejected. Now I do not assert that each of these colonies would derive the same amount of benefit from free institutions; but I am prepared to maintain that with representative government every one of them, not excepting the Mauritius, would have been more economically and better governed than they have been or are governed by the Colonial Office.

In saying this I do not mean to speak with disrespect either of past or present Secretaries of State for the Colonies;

but there is no essential difference between them; the system is throughout the same, whoever may be the nominal chief. Of that system, however, I do intend to speak with disrespect; and I can quote, in justification of my so doing, some high authorities on this side of the House, who have carefully studied the subject. I mean my honourable friend the member for Liskeard (Mr. C. Buller), the honourable gentleman the member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward), and the noble earl at the head of the Colonial Office, before he became Secretary of State for the Colonies. As long as that system exists, the majority of the colonies must be ill-governed, and their inhabitants discontented; for the Colonial Office undertakes to perform an impossible task. It undertakes the administration, civil, military, financial, judicial, and ecclesiastical, of some forty different communities, with various institutions, languages, laws, customs, wants, and interests. It undertakes to legislate more or less for all these colonies, and altogether for those which have no representative assemblies. It would be difficult enough to discharge all these functions in a single office, if all the colonies were close together and close to England, but they are scattered over the surface of the globe, from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole. To most of them several months must elapse, to some of them a whole year must elapse, before an answer to a letter can be received, before a petition can be complied with, or a grievance redressed. Therefore, orders which are issued from the Colonial Office in accordance with the last advices from a colony are, in innumerable instances, wholly unsuited to the state of the colony when the orders arrive; in some cases, questions which time has settled are reopened, forgotten disputes are revived, and the tardy interference of the Colonial Office is felt to be a curse even when a wrong is redressed. In other cases, the instructions of the Colonial Office are wisely disregarded by the governors, or rejected with derision by the colonial assemblies, who marvel at the crass ignorance of their transatlantic rulers.

In addition to its other arduous functions, the Colonial

Office is required to assist in the vain attempt to suppress the slave trade with Africa; and it has likewise the difficult task of administering a secondary punishment in a penal colony at the antipodes. Now, if it were possible for any mortal man to discharge the duties of such an office, it is evident that he ought to possess, not merely great mental powers, but a long and intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the different colonies; he should be brought up to the business, it should be the study of his life, and he should be appointed on account of his special aptitude to conduct such business. Is this the rule for selecting Secretaries of State for the colonies? Nothing of the kind. They are generally chosen haphazard from the chiefs of the two great political parties in this or the other House of Parliament; and they retain their office, on the average, some eighteen months or so. During the last nine years there have been no less than six Colonial Secretaries—namely, Lord Glenelg, Lord Normanby, Lord John Russell, Lord Stanley, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Grey. All of them, I acknowledge, are men of great ability; all of them, I believe, most anxious to use their abilities for the benefit of their country and of the colonies; but I feel persuaded that one-third of them had little or no acquaintance with colonial affairs prior to their acceptance of office. Just, therefore, as they were beginning to learn the wants and interests of the more important colonies, and to acquire the first rudiments of colonial lore, they were succeeded by some other statesman, who had to commence his lessons as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to try his hand in the despotic and irresponsible government of some score or so of dependent states.

In fact, the Colonial Government of this country is an ever-changing, frequently well-intentioned, but invariably weak and ignorant despotism. Its policy varies incessantly, swayed about by opposite influences; at one time directed, perhaps, by the West India body, the next instant by the Anti-Slavery Society, then by Canadian merchants, or by a New Zealand Company, or by a Missionary Society: it is everything by

turns, and nothing long; Saint, Protectionist, Free-trader, in rapid succession; one day it originates a project, the next day abandons it; therefore, all its schemes are abortions, and all its measures are unsuccessful. Witness the economical condition of the West Indies, the frontier relations of the Cape of Good Hope, the immoral state of Van Diemen's Land, and the pseudo-systematic colonization and revoked constitution of New Zealand.

Such a government might suit serfs and other barbarians; but to men of our race, intelligent and energetic Englishmen, accustomed to freedom and to local self-government, it is one of the most hateful and odious governments that can well be imagined. It is difficult to express the deep-seated hatred and contempt which is felt for the Colonial Office by almost every dependency subject to its sway. If you doubt this fact, put the question to the West Indies and the Mauritius; put the same question to Van Diemen's Land, to New South Wales, to New Zealand, and your other Australian colonies; from all of them you will receive the same answer, and the same prayer to be freed from the control of the Colonial Office. Even the Canadas are not content, though they have responsible government; and though, in most respects, they are virtually independent of the Colonial Office; yet every now and then the Colonial Office contrives to produce irritation by stupid interference in some question of minor importance, such as the regulations of a banking-bill, or the amount of a petty salary.

Though the colonies have ample reason to complain of the manner in which their affairs are administered by the Colonial Office in this country, they have still greater reason to complain of the governors and other functionaries who are sent by the Colonial Office to the colonies; for, generally speaking, they are chosen, not on account of any special aptitude for, or knowledge of, the business they will have to perform, but for reasons foreign to the interests of the colonies. For instance, poor relations, or needy dependents of men having political influence; officers in the army or navy, who have been

unsuccessful in their professions; briefless barristers; electioneering agents; importunate applicants for public employment, whose employment in this country public opinion would forbid; and at times, even discreditable partisans whom it is expedient to get rid of in the colonies; these are the materials out of which the Colonial Office has too frequently manufactured its governors and other functionaries. Therefore, in most cases, they are signally unfit for the duties which they have to perform, and being wholly ignorant of the affairs of the colony to which they are appointed, they become the tools of one or other of the colonial factions; whence perpetual jealousies and never-ending feuds. The governors, the judges, and the other high functionaries are generally on hostile terms. The governors amove the judges, the judges appeal to us for redress; every year a petition or two of this kind comes under the consideration of Parliament. To settle such questions the Colonial Office has just created a new tribunal, composed of an ex-Indian judge and railway commissioner, and of an ex-permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies; the one with little knowledge of colonial affairs, the other famed for years as the real head of the colonial system, and, therefore, reputed to be the evil genius of the colonies. It would be easy to cite instances which have occurred during the last ten years which would illustrate every one of these positions. I forbear, however, from mentioning names, as the facts are notorious to every one who has taken any interest in colonial affairs.

It is no wonder that the colonies are discontented, and that they are badly and expensively governed. Is there any remedy for this state of things? I have traced the evil to its source in the colonial system of the Colonial Office. Can that system be amended? It appears to me that the Colonial Office, as an instrument for governing the colonies, must always be far inferior to any mode of self-government by the colonists; for it is evident that at least in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, the colonists—the men on the spot—must be better

judges of their own interests than honourable gentlemen far away in Downing Street can possibly be. It is evident, likewise, that, though the empire at large has a deep interest in the good and economical government of the colonies, though all of us here present are most sincerely desirous that the colonies should be contented and happy, yet we have other things to do besides studying colonial affairs and looking after the Colonial Office; therefore, the Colonial Office is virtually irresponsible. It may play what pranks it pleases; it is only when we have to pay for a Canadian insurrection, or a Kaffir war, that an outcry is raised, and the Colonial Office itself is called to account, and then there is not above a score of us who know anything about the subject, even after a laborious study of the documents carefully prepared for the purpose by the Colonial Office. Remember, likewise, that implicit reliance cannot be placed on those documents. Some, for instance, are long didactic despatches, written for the sole purpose of being presented to Parliament, not intended to produce any specific results in the colonies, but full of well-turned periods, containing lofty sentiments and apparently statesmanlike views, calculated to gain credit for the office, and to satisfy the minds of honourable, ignorant, and confiding members, who soon afterwards forget all about the matter. Again, as a collection of materials for enabling the House to form a judgment with regard to colonial affairs, those documents are not to be trusted, for, generally speaking, they are tainted with partiality, and necessarily so, because they are selected out of a vast mass, on account of their supposed importance. Of that importance the Colonial Office is the sole and irresponsible judge: it determines without appeal what shall be produced and what shall be suppressed. In so doing, it must obey the unchanging laws of human nature, and attach greater importance to those documents which confirm its views, and less importance to those which are adverse to its opinions. The former, therefore, obtain its special care, and are sure to be produced; the latter are comparatively neglected, and liable to

be forgotten and suppressed; the result is inevitable, namely, partial statements; instances of human fallibility, affording incontestible proofs of the impossibility under which this House labours of forming a correct judgment with regard to colonial affairs. For similar reasons the Colonial Office labours under a similar difficulty, because the statements made to it by the colonial authorities must frequently be of a partial character, and at times wholly untrustworthy; yet always months, and sometimes whole years, elapse before any explanation of those statements can be obtained. Therefore ignorance and irresponsibility are the characteristic defects of our present mode of governing the colonies. For these defects there is no remedy but local self-government.

Hence I come to the conclusion, that we should delegate to the colonies all powers of local legislation and administration which are now possessed by the Colonial Office, with the reservation only of those powers the exercise of which would be absolutely inconsistent with the sovereignty of this country, or might be directly injurious to the interests of the whole empire. It appears to me that the powers that ought to be so reserved are few in number, and could easily be defined. To determine them, it would be necessary merely to consider what are the benefits which this country may derive from the colonies, and what is requisite to secure the continuous enjoyment of those benefits.

Colonies are useful either as affording markets for our produce, or outlets for our population. To prove their utility as markets, my honourable friend the member for Liskeard, in his most able and admirable speech, in 1843, on systematic colonization, showed that the rate of consumption of British produce and manufactures, per head of the population, was very much greater in colonies than in other countries. Of the correctness of this position there can be no doubt. In 1844, continental Europe, with a population of about 220,000,000 of inhabitants, did not consume more than £24,000,000 worth of our produce and manufactures; whilst our colonies (including

the United States), with a population not exceeding 25,000,000, consumed £16,000,000 worth of our goods. Therefore, while the rate of consumption of our goods did not exceed 2*s.* 2*d.* a head in continental Europe, it amounted to 8*s.* a head in the United States, and £1 12*s.* a head in our other colonies. It must, however, be admitted, that a considerable portion of our trade with our subject colonies consists of goods sent to defray the cost of our establishments there. Making, however, every fair deduction on that account, still it cannot be denied that they are excellent markets for our goods. It is very unfortunate, therefore, that they cost us so much as 16*s.* a head of their population for government and defence, as that sum must absorb the greater portion of, if not all, the profit of our trade with those colonies.

To show the utility of colonies as outlets for our population, I may refer to the reports of the emigration commissioners, from which it appears that, in the course of the last twenty years, 1,673,803 persons have emigrated from this country, of whom 825,564 went to the United States, 702,101 to the North American colonies, 127,188 to the Australian colonies, and 19,090 to other places. It would be interesting to know what has been the cost of this emigration, and how it has been defrayed. I cannot put it down at less than £20,000,000 sterling, of which about £1,500,000 were paid out of the proceeds of land sales in the Australian colonies. This emigration has varied considerably in amount from year to year; from the minimum of 26,092 persons in 1828, to the maximum of 258,270 persons last year. If averages of five years be taken, it appears to have gone on steadily increasing in amount; for on the average of the five years ending with 1832, it amounted to 60,000 persons a year; ending with 1837, to 66,000 persons a year; ending with 1842, to 86,000 persons a year; and ending with 1847, to 121,000 persons a year. Therefore the habit of emigrating is confirmed, and becoming more powerful every day; and therefore colonies are becoming more useful as outlets for our population.

Therefore, free trade with the colonies, and free access to the colonies, should, in my opinion, be the sole end and aim of the dominion which Great Britain still retains over her colonies. By keeping these two objects distinctly in view, by bestowing upon the colonies all powers of local legislation and administration which are not absolutely inconsistent with these objects and the sovereignty of this country, I believe that our colonial expenditure might be greatly diminished in amount, and that our colonial empire would flourish and become of incalculable utility to this country.

I do not propose to abandon any portion of that empire. I only complain that it is so little use to us; that it is a vast tract of fertile desert, which costs us £4,000,000 sterling a year, and yet only contains a million and a half of our race. Would it not be possible to people this desert with active and thriving Englishmen? To cover it with communities composed of men with wants, habits, and feelings similar to our own, anxious to carry on with us a mutually beneficial trade? In this country, every trade, every profession, and every branch of industry, are overstocked; in every quarter there is a fierce competition for employment. On the contrary, in the colonies there is an equally fierce competition for labour of every kind. Now, is there any mode of bridging over the oceans that intervene, so that our colonies may be to the United Kingdom what the backwoods are to the United States? If such a plan could be devised, if it could be carried into execution, it might tend to solve the most difficult economical problems of England and of Ireland.

To carry such a plan into execution, two things would be requisite. First, funds wherewith to convey the poorer classes to the colonies. How could such funds be obtained? The honourable gentleman the member for Sheffield, the honourable gentleman the member for Gateshead, and my honourable friend the member for Liskeard, have, in their numerous and able speeches upon this subject, told us that sufficient funds could be obtained by the sale of waste lands, according to the well-

known plan of Mr. Wakefield. I hold the same opinion. I firmly believe that, with continuous and systematic emigration, sufficient funds could be so obtained. But I will suppose, for the sake of argument, that they must be obtained, for the present, from some other source. Now, I ask the House to consider, first, that we spend £4,000,000 sterling a year in the colonies on army, navy, ordnance, commissariat, Kaffir wars, Canadian rebellions, and the like; secondly, that for half £4,000,000 (the sum which I propose to save by a reduction of colonial expenditure) we might send annually to Australia 150,000 persons, and to Canada twice that number. I ask the House, at the expiration of ten or fifteen years, from which of these two modes of expending the public money would the nation derive the greater benefit? Our army, navy, and ordnance cost us at present from six to seven millions sterling a year more than they did in 1835, when their force was ample for the defence of the empire. What have we to show in return for this enormous increase of expenditure? A Canadian insurrection suppressed, a Kaffir war terminated, barren trophies in India, the gates of Somnauth, Hong Kong, Labuan, and the Falkland Islands. What should we have had to show for it had only a portion of it been expended on colonization? A third part of it (the £2,000,000 a year, which I affirm can be spared from our colonial expenditure) would have been sufficient in ten years to double or triple the British population of our colonial empire.

For instance, that sum would in ten years have conveyed a million and a half of our fellow-citizens to Australasia; where the climate is so peculiarly suited to our race, where abundance of food can easily be obtained; there, flourishing and contented, they would have been anxious to purchase our produce and manufactures; wealthy states, worthy of the British name, would have been generated, carrying on with us an enormous trade; self-governed, they would have needed neither army nor navy to protect them, and would have gladly defrayed every local expense. That would have been a colonial empire to boast about!

Again, the same sum of £2,000,000 sterling a year would, in ten years, have conveyed to North America some three millions—say, of Irishmen. With that sum I believe you might have created beyond the Atlantic a new and happy Ireland, so attractive to the Celtic race that they would have migrated in shoals from the old and unhappy Ireland, and thus, perhaps, have enabled you to solve that fearful problem, which neither gagging bills, nor coercion bills, nor alien bills, nor even a repeal of the union will ever solve. That, indeed, would have been a feat for a great statesman to accomplish, and would have covered his name with immortal renown! I do grudge the £4,000,000 a year which we squander upon our colonies, when I consider what might be done with half that sum for the benefit of this country, and of the colonies by means of systematic colonization.

But to colonize beneficially, it is necessary that the higher and richer, as well as the poorer classes, that the employers of labour as well as the employed, that all classes of society, should migrate together, forming new communities, analogous to that of the parent state. On such principles alone have successful colonies been founded in ancient or modern times. On such principles the colonies of Greece and of New England were founded.

For instance, from the overcrowded cities of Greece the colonists departed under the guidance of their foremost men; they carried along with them the images of their heroes and their gods, whose common worship linked them for ever to their ancient home; arrived at their destination, they formed states after the model of the parent city; they flourished in wealth, excelled in all the arts of civilized life, extended the empire, and added to the renown of the Dorian or Ionian name. Not dissimilar in principle was the old English mode of colonizing, except that our colonies, instead of commencing their existence as independent states, professed their allegiance to the mother country; but their charters gave them all the essential powers of self-government, and complete control over

their internal affairs. They flourished rapidly, were most loyal, and sincerely attached to our empire, till we drove them into just rebellion by our new colonial system. Very different from these successful modes of colonizing has been that of the Colonial Office. It has been either a shovelling out of paupers or a transportation of criminals, whereby some of the fairest portions of the British dominions have been converted into pest-houses of pauperism, or sinks of iniquity, polluting the earth with unheard-of diseases and unmentionable crimes. No gentleman, no man of birth or education, who knows anything about the matter, would ever think of emigrating to a colony, to be under the control of the Colonial Office. But if the colonies were properly planted, and self-governed according to the old fashion, then our kinsmen and friends, instead of overstocking the liberal professions, instead of overcrowding the army and navy, where no career is open for them, would seek their fortunes in the colonies and prosper; for we are by nature a colonizing people. The same destiny that led our forefathers from their homes in the farthest east, still urges us onwards to occupy the uninhabited regions of the west and the south; and America, and Australia, and New Zealand anxiously expect our arrival to convert their wastes into happy abodes of the Anglo-Saxon race.

In making these observations I wish merely to show, that if vast sums of money are to be expended on the colonies, they can be expended in a manner far more beneficial to the interests both of the colonies and of the rest of the empire than they have been hitherto expended. I do not, however, intend to propose to the House any plan of systematic colonization, or any grant of public money for that purpose. My only objects, at present, are reduction of useless expenditure, and reform of bad colonial government, which are things good in themselves without reference to any ulterior measures. But I will presume to express my belief that there is a great and noble career open for any statesman who, possessing the power, shall, with firm and vigorous determination, curtail that

expenditure, reform that system of government, and, at the same time, promote systematic colonization. In what manner colonial expenditure can be curtailed without detriment to the interests of the empire, in what manner the system of colonial government can be amended for the benefit of the colonies, I have attempted to show; and in the hope that I have succeeded in proving that that expenditure ought to be curtailed, and that system of government ought to be amended, I take the liberty of moving the resolution:—'That it is the opinion of this House that the colonial expenditure of the British Empire demands inquiry, with a view to its reduction; and that to accomplish this reduction, and to secure greater contentment and prosperity to the colonists, they ought to be invested with large powers for the administration of their local affairs.' And if the Government will accede to this motion, I give notice that next session I shall follow up this subject by moving for a committee of inquiry.

III.—THE PRUSSIAN ZOLLVEREIN IN 1840

By Richard Cobden

This remarkable letter, which has never been reprinted since its publication in the *Anti-Corn-Law Circular*, testifies to the statesmanlike sagacity of the leader of the Manchester School and contrasts with the narrow ignorance that has so often dominated our Foreign Office especially in regard to commercial movements abroad. The customs laws of Prussia were consolidated and simplified in 1818, and ten years later Hesse-Darmstadt joined the Prussian Union, to be followed in 1833 by Bavaria and Würtemberg and (reluctantly) by Saxony and the smaller states. The formation of the Zollverein was in itself, as Cobden saw, very advantageous not only to Germany but to all countries which traded with her, the customs tariff being lower than most of the separate tariffs which previously existed in thirty-eight different states and cities. His prediction that tariff reductions in England would lead to a more liberal policy in Germany was also verified, and for many years Germany became one of our principal sources of food supply, sending us in 1877 no less than 7,000,000 cwt. of wheat and flour. And at the present time the empire of Germany appears among the three or four best customers of British manufactured goods.

Seventh letter from a member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, on the Continent.

Frankfort, Thursday, October 22nd, 1840.

The Prussian Commercial Union.

On leaving Basle to come by land to this city, I found myself within the territory of the German Union, commonly called the *Prussian Commercial Union*. Before the revolutionary wars Germany was divided into more than three hundred independent states and upwards of fifty-three free cities, all enjoying

the privileges of so many distinct sovereignties. The greater part of these were swept away by the tempest of the French revolution. Germany, however, still contains thirty-eight independent states, eighteen of which have less than 100,000 inhabitants each. Until the recent formation of the Commercial League, these states were allied only by a union of the *governments* under the name of the German Confederation, whilst the intercourse of the *people* was obstructed by separate custom house regulations, and travellers were liable to be searched, several times in the course of a day's journey, at the frontiers of these insignificant territories. But, thanks to the enlightened labours of Prussian statesmen, these impediments no longer exist. From the confines of the Tyrol to the shores of the Baltic, and from the frontiers of Belgium to the borders of Russia, no custom house or duties now obstruct the free course of trade, or the progress of the traveller.

Enlightened commercial policy of Prussia.

Much misapprehension still exists in England as to the nature and objects of the Prussian Commercial League. Whilst in the course of formation, this union was held up to the jealousy and dislike of the British people, as having been conceived in a spirit of hostility to their commercial interests. Our ministers were frequently questioned in parliament upon the subject, and, amongst other efforts of a similar kind, our representative here was instructed to exert his influence (which he did, but of course unsuccessfully) to prevent these free cities from joining the league. The policy of our aristocracy has always been to divert the attention of the people from the evils arising from their own selfish laws. The same legislators who have dammed up a thousand streams of commerce by their Corn Law, are ever ready with the offers of their services to remove some alleged impediment to our trade abroad.

Jealousy of the Zollverein in England.

The motives which influenced the authors of the League may be easily understood from the preamble of the treaty of 1833, which begins thus: 'The contracting powers, penetrated

with a lively solicitude for whatever may contribute to the freedom and extension of commerce and industry in their respective states,' etc. And the first article gives a sufficient explanation of the objects contemplated by the treaty—

'Article I.—The various associations of custom houses, already existing in the said states, shall for the future form, by virtue of a common system of custom houses and of commerce, a general association, which shall include all countries comprised in such associations.'

Whatever other motives may have influenced the Prussian cabinet, no rational mind now believes that it was actuated by any feelings of hostility to British interests. It has been surmised, and very plausibly, that in putting herself at the head of a commercial union, Prussia sought to acquire a political influence among the German states, to counteract the ascendancy which Austria (not included in the League) possessed as the acknowledged head of the German confederation. The question of importance, however, to you and to your readers is, what will be the probable effects of this union of upwards of 26 millions of people within one line of custom houses upon the interests of the British Empire? Can we increase our commerce with these rich and cultivated nations, and how? In the course of my travels on a late occasion in every part of the union, I made especial inquiries upon the latter point, and the result was a confirmation of the opinion given by Doctor Bowring, that with a modification of our own Corn Laws, we may insure a reciprocal reduction of the duties upon British goods, and a proportionate extension of our commercial relations with the countries of the League. My inquiries extended to individuals of every class—to those who are interested in trading with us, and those who would benefit by shutting us out—to the agriculturists of Prussia and Bavaria, the manufacturers of Saxony and Westphalia, and the merchants and bankers of Frankfort, and I have

Possible extension of British commerce with Germany.

found the unanimous opinion of intelligent men to be that we have the power in our own hands of lowering the tariff upon our manufactures in Germany, and they uniformly pointed to a reduction of duty upon corn as the indispensable preliminary to any modification of the duties upon our commodities.

Being one of those who composed the Anti-Corn-Law deputation that waited on Lord Melbourne in the spring, I have not forgotten the easy assurance with which the pleasant premier delivered his opinion, that there was no chance of increasing our trade with the countries of the German League. In the course of a conversation yesterday, with one of the public men here, he reminded me of his lordship's characteristic sally, and observed, shrewdly enough, that it was a pity he did not arrive at that conclusion before sending Doctor Bowring, at some expense, to Berlin to bring back a contrary opinion. 'If his lordship will give me a *carte blanche*,' said he, 'upon the corn question, I will undertake to secure to the English manufacturers a vast extension of their trade with Germany.'

The most conclusive proof, however, that the people of Germany would be glad to extend their commercial relations with us, is to be found in *the simple fact that it is their interest so to do.* The principal states of the League, as Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, Würtemberg, etc., are agricultural rather than manufacturing. In Prussia the agricultural population are to the manufacturers as more than five to one; and of the 26 millions of people contained in the Commercial League, nearly 17 millions are dependent on agriculture. The benefits derived from the present high protecting duties upon manufactured goods fall principally to the lot of Saxony; but it is not reasonable to suppose that the other States would voluntarily and gratuitously sacrifice themselves for the benefit of one of the members of the Union; more especially as it was no part of the original design of the League to levy high duties for protection. The duty originally put upon cotton manufactures, for instance, was 10 per cent. only; but, as it is levied by weight, and not *ad valorem*, the diminished value of

the goods has raised the duty in some instances to 70 or 80 per cent. Any negociation for increasing our commerce with this important Union must be addressed to the Government of Berlin, which has every motive for meeting us in the most amicable spirit. Her Polish provinces, now so much behind the rest of Prussia in wealth, intelligence, and civilization, would derive peculiar and incalculable benefits from a trade in corn with England. With a repeal of our corn law, indeed, Pomerania might speedily become the most valuable of the Prussian provinces, yielding, as it does in the greatest abundance, the finest wheat in Europe. The Prussian ports on the Baltic would be the scene of an active commerce in corn, in which native vessels might be expected to share largely; and Dantzig would undoubtedly become the Liverpool of the corn trade. With these paramount motives for extending its commercial relations with England, we may feel certain that so wise a Government as that of Berlin would gladly embrace the opportunity of effecting such an object. But the *sine qua non* of any such arrangement must be the repeal or modification of our corn law. It is folly to attempt to enlarge our trade with the countries of northern Europe, unless we are prepared to take in payment for our manufactures their staple product—grain.

But dependent on repeal of corn laws.

Whatever may be its ultimate effect upon the interests of foreign countries, the union of the Germans within one line of custom houses is calculated for the almost unmixed benefit of the people. Speaking one language, and having a uniformity of weights and measures, and of money (the latter are now in course of assimilation), they will form, for almost all practical and beneficial ends, one nation. This union is the first in the annals of empires that has been formed exclusively for the promotion of the material interests of the people; formed, too, peaceably, and without even the intervention of diplomatic intrigue. Unlike most other instances of the amalgamation of

Peaceful formation and beneficial ends of the Zollverein.

European territory, the claims of legitimacy, or the lust of extended dominion, have had no share in the formation of the League ; and one of its most interesting features, bearing, as it does, powerfully upon the future destinies of the Germans, is, that whereas their Commercial Union affords the strongest motive for refraining from oppression or conquest, it confers upon them a growing *defensive* power, which will be the best safeguard against the wanton attacks of other nations.

IV.—ON THE PROPOSED BRITISH ZOLLVEREIN, OR COMMERCIAL UNION WITH THE COLONIES

This masterly essay was written for the Cobden Club by the late Lord Farrer in 1896, and was entitled 'The Neo-Protection Scheme of the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies.' Lord Farrer has gladly allowed me to reprint this example of his father's work. I have edited it and brought most of the figures up to date in order that the public may have a complete Cobdenic criticism of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals. Lord Farrer (1819–1899) was Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade from 1865 to 1886, and succeeded Mr. Potter as President of the Cobden Club.

Growth of commercial imperialism in 1892.

When, in 1892, the Chambers of Commerce, British and Colonial, met in London to consider the subject of Commercial Federation of the empire, the advocates of what was then known as fair trade had the courage to propose a definite resolution to the effect that the United Kingdom should give to the colonies preferential treatment.

That resolution was negatived by a large majority.

Since then great efforts have been made by the advocates of this new form of protection. Mr. Hofmeyr, Sir Charles Tupper, and Sir Howard Vincent have stumped the empire; congresses have been held at Ottawa, and finally, again, in London; one of our chief economic journals has devoted £1000 in prizes for the best scheme of commercial federation; and the Marquis of Lorne has been called in to give exalted sanction to the least unacceptable proposal which the ablest and most distinguished supporters of the movement

could devise. Finally, our own Colonial Secretary has taken the chair at the recent Colonial and British Congress in London, and has there publicly not only intimated his own desire, and, as we must assume, that of the Government, for Imperial Protection, but has sketched an outline of such a scheme; and the *Times*, in its earlier and better days an unflinching advocate of free trade, has patted the Colonial Secretary on the back.

Under such a concatenation of favourable circumstances it was to be expected that our Neo-Protectionists would have made some progress. But no! At this congress in London the Canadian delegates dared to propose nothing more specific than a vague resolution in favour of an arrangement

'*As nearly as possible in the nature of a Zollverein*, based upon principles of freest exchange of commodities within the empire consistent with the tariff requirements incident to the maintenance of the local government of each kingdom, dominion, province, or colony now forming part of the British family of nations.'

This resolution, which, but for the ambiguous term 'Zollverein,' might be accepted by a free trader, was felt by some of themselves to be too vague, and an amendment was moved to the effect that—

'This Congress records its belief in the advisability and practicability of a customs arrangement between Great Britain and her colonies and India *on the basis of preferential treatment*.'

But so little did either the resolution—apparently harmless as it was—or the amendment meet the views of the assembled delegates, that the proposers of both found it necessary to withdraw them, and to substitute a perfectly meaningless resolution, to the effect that the Government should be invited to summon a conference to consider the subject.

Even Canada, which, under the leadership of Sir Charles Tupper, was the prime mover of this Neo-Protection scheme, has at this critical moment thrown off his baneful guidance,

and declared herself for a ministry which is opposed to the principle of protection.

Under these circumstances it seems almost superfluous to enter at length, for the hundredth time, upon the reasons which make any such proposals as those of the Canadian delegates and of Mr. Chamberlain—for they are in effect one and the same—undesirable and impracticable. Purposely vague as they were, and consequently presenting as small a front to attack as possible, they have been felt to involve principles which the country is unwilling to accept, and have fallen through with no result except discredit to their promoters.

But as the Cobden Club are often told that they answer practical proposals by fanatical adherence to *à priori* dogmas, and as Mr. Chamberlain and his supporters evince complete ignorance of all that has been said upon the subject by the advocates of free trade, it may be worth while to indicate once again what are the difficulties which our Neo-Protectionists have to meet.

It may be well to quote Mr. Chamberlain's last words upon the subject. Of the resolution which he approves, and which, as I have said, was withdrawn, he speaks as follows:—

Mr. Chamberlain's scheme for a British Zollverein.

'That resolution I understand to be one for the creation of a British Zollverein or Customs Union, which would establish at once practically free trade throughout the British Empire, but would leave the separate contracting parties free to make their own arrangements with regard to duties on foreign goods, except that this is an essential condition of the proposal—that Great Britain shall consent to replace moderate duties upon certain articles which are of large production in the Colonies. Now, if I have rightly understood it, these articles would comprise corn, meat, wool, and sugar, and perhaps other articles of enormous consumption in this country, which are at present largely produced in the colonies, and which might, under such an arrangement, be wholly produced in the colonies and wholly produced by British labour. On the other hand, as I have said, the colonies, while

maintaining their duties upon foreign importations, would agree to a free interchange of commodities with the rest of the empire, and would cease to place protective duties on any product of British labour.[1] That is the principle of the German Zollverein ; that is the principle which underlies federation in the United States of America ; and I do not doubt for a moment that if it were adopted it would be the strongest bond of union between the British race throughout the world. I say such a proposal as that might commend itself even to an orthodox Free Trader. It would be the greatest advance that Free Trade has ever made since it was first advocated by Mr. Cobden to extend its doctrines permanently to more than three hundred millions of the human race, and to communities many of which are amongst the most thriving, the most prosperous, and the most increasing in the world. On the other hand, it would open up to the colonies an almost unlimited market for their agricultural and other productions.'

Exaggerations involved in this statement.

Let us begin by stripping these proposals of their rhetorical exaggerations. It is all very well to talk of extending free trade to more than 300 millions of people, and of opening up to the colonies an almost unlimited market. But what are the facts? Let us assume —it is not far from the truth—that the population of the British Empire is about 300 millions. But it is not the population of the British Empire whose markets would be opened, or to whom free trade would be extended, under Mr. Chamberlain's proposals. The markets of the 40 millions who inhabit the United Kingdom are already open to the colonies. The markets of the 250 millions who inhabit India are also open. The markets of the Crown Colonies and of other dependencies are also open, so far as their several circumstances will permit. In none of these cases is there any protective principle, any interferences with free trade, which Mr. Chamberlain's scheme would remove.

[1] Since then the Canadian Government has explained that it will not give up protection of Canadian as against British manufacturers, though it may be willing to increase differential duties against foreign countries.

On the contrary, with regard to the whole of these vast populations—composing from 270 *to* 280 *millions of people—Mr. Chamberlain's proposal is to close markets, not to open them; to make them adopt a system which will shut out foreign goods and deprive them* pro tanto *of foreign markets for their own produce.*

The only cases in which Mr. Chamberlain's proposal will open markets are the cases of those self-governing colonies which, in the exercise of the freedom they enjoy, have adopted protective systems against one another, against the rest of the empire, and against the world. As regards these, Mr. Chamberlain's proposal would, if accepted, open their markets to one another and to the rest of the empire, but would close them or keep them closed to the rest of the world.

Let us understand what this would amount to.

The whole population of the self-governing colonies, according to the last statistical abstract, is as follows, viz :—

Canada and Newfoundland (say) . . .	5,000,000
Cape of Good Hope and Natal (say) . .	2,250,000
Australasia (say)	4,200,000
	11,450,000

Let us say 12 millions out of 300 millions, or about $\frac{1}{25}$th of the population of the empire. So far as the opening of markets goes, it is from these 12 millions only that either the mother country or the rest of the empire can hope to derive any benefit by Mr. Chamberlain's scheme.

Now let us see what his scheme amounts to.

Put into plain words, it means—

Meaning of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals.

First, that this country shall place protective and preferential duties, as against all foreign countries, upon all such articles of food and raw material as are produced in the colonies; these duties to be of such an amount and character as to secure to the colonies the exclusive possession of the markets of the United Kingdom.

Secondly, that the colonies shall maintain protective duties upon foreign goods, but shall maintain no protective duties on any goods produced within the British Empire.

Let us consider the effect of these two propositions. In the first place, as regards both of them, they involve a sort of commercial treaty between different parts of the British Empire, and they involve a treaty of a very peculiar kind.

All the recent commercial treaties of which we have experience are treaties by which the two parties mutually agree to take off duties on one another's goods, and thus to make an approach to free exchange. Even such treaties as these are by many of us now regarded with disfavour, and are thought to have injured the cause of free trade. They make the taking off of duties a matter of bargain; and thus create the impression that taking off protective duties is a sacrifice. But what shall we think of a treaty, one essential feature of which is, not to take off duties, but to bind each party to impose or to maintain protective duties against the rest of the world?

We have most of us heard of the mischiefs of the Methuen Treaty, which compelled Great Britain to give a preference to the heavy wines of Portugal; but what shall we say of a treaty which binds England to exclude the low-priced corn, meat, wool, and sugar of the United States, of Russia, and of Argentina, of France and of Germany, in order that she may obtain these articles at a higher price from Canada, India, Australia, and the West Indies?

Or, to look at the same question from a colonial point of view—

What shall we say of a treaty which binds Canada and Australia to buy no articles from the United States or from China which those colonies can buy, though at a higher price, from Great Britain or from India?

Let us consider the practical results which any such treaty would have on the interests of the several parties to it; and,

first of all, let us consider the interests of the United Kingdom. We are asked to place now and for ever—or, at any rate, for a great number of years—a tax upon the food and raw materials which are the essence of our prosperity. This tax must be such as to raise the cost to us of those articles above what it would otherwise have been, or it cannot have the effect which it is intended to have—namely, of keeping out foreign produce. It must therefore be a serious limitation of our present resources.

Consequences to the trade of the United Kingdom.

Nor is this all.

It must also be to the same extent a limitation of the markets for our own manufactures.

For if we do not buy from foreign countries, we shall not sell to them.

Now, what are we to get in return for these immense sacrifices? The late prime minister of Canada has, as already noticed, been the chief mover in this agitation. What shall we get from Canada? Increased trade with Canada. To judge of the value of this we must answer the following questions, viz., What is our present trade with Canada? What proportion has it borne and what proportion does it now bear to our whole trade and to our foreign trade? And, again, what is the whole trade of Canada, and how much of it are we likely to get by the proposals now under consideration?

British trade with Canada.

Our trade with Canada has been as follows[1]:—

[1] See Board of Trade Return, C. 6394 of 1891, pp. 71–79. The figures have been continued from the most recent Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom. By Canada Lord Farrer seems to have intended British North America, which includes Newfoundland, a distinct colony and customs area.—F. W. H.

Periods.	Imports into United Kingdom from Canada.		Exports of British produce to Canada.	
	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Imports into United Kingdom.	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Exports from United Kingdom.
Average of five years, 1855 to 1859 . .	5	3·3	4	3·1
Average of five years, 1885 to 1889 . .	10	2·8	8	3·4
Average of five years, 1890 to 1894 . .	13	3·1	7	3·0
Average of five years, 1895 to 1899 . .	18	4·0	6	2·6

The whole trade of Canada, according to the last statistical abstract for the colonies, was as follows:—

Years ended 30th June.	Total Exports from Canada to all Countries.	Total Imports into Canada from all Countries.
	Million £.	Million £.
1875	16	26
1880	18	18
1885	18½	23
1890	20	25
1895	23	22½
1900	39½	39

and our share of it, according to the same return, was[1]—

Years ended 30th June.	Exports from Canada to United Kingdom.	Imports from the United Kingdom into Canada, including foreign as well as British Produce.
	Million £.	Million £.
1875	8	12½
1880	10	7
1885	9	9
1890	10	9
1895	12½	6½
1900	22	9

[1] See note on p. 459.

Our own returns of imports from and exports to Canada give slightly different results from those of Canada, as must always be the case, for various reasons, with statistics collected in two different countries. Our own returns give the following figures [1]:—

Years.	Imports from Canada (and Newfoundland) into the United Kingdom.	Exports to Canada from the United Kingdom.
	Million £.	Million £.
1875	10	9
1880	13	8
1885	10	7
1890	12	7
1895	13	5½
1900	22	7½

So that, if we got the whole trade of Canada, as it now exists—which is, of course, a preposterous assumption—we should only get twice or three times as much trade with her as we now get, and that whole trade of Canada would be still an insignificant fraction of our whole trade.

The gain to us by any such bargain must therefore be infinitesimal. What would our sacrifice be? We are asked to put differential duties on things which Canada sends us—when they come from foreign countries. Now, what does she send us? Chiefly cattle, meat of various kinds, corn, flour, cheese, lard, butter, leather, skins, fish, fruit, and timber. In 1894 the value of these things which we had from Canada was about £11,500,000; but in the same year the value of these things which we had from all other countries was much more than £130,000,000, and the value of these articles which we imported from Canada's great rival, the United States, was more than £46,000,000. We are therefore asked to deprive

[1] See Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom. Here again the figures for imports are slightly vitiated by the inclusion of Newfoundland. It is a defect of the Statistical Abstract that it does not give the imports from Canada alone.—F. W. H.

ourselves of necessaries from the United States alone valued at £46,000,000, besides an immense quantity from other countries, on the empty promise that Canada's £11,500,000 will, under the encouragement given by a differential duty, grow into the larger amount.

But there is much more behind. If and so far as we cease to import from the United States, we shall cease to export to them, and we shall thus cripple our exchange with that great country. Nor is this all. The Government of the United States have both the power and the will to retaliate by imposing differential duties on our trade. If they do, it will go a great way towards ruining our trade with them. Let us see what this trade is, and compare it with the above figures of our trade with Canada.[1]

Periods.	Imports into United Kingdom from United States.		Exports of British produce to United States.	
	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Imports into United Kingdom.	Million £	Per cent. of Total Exports from United Kingdom.
Average of five years, 1855 to 1859 . .	33	19·4	19	16·4
Average of five years, 1885 to 1889 . .	85	22·5	28	12·2
Average of five years, 1890 to 1894 . .	98	23·5	26	11·0
Average of five years, 1895 to 1899 . .	110	24·4	20½	8·7

And in addition to the visible exports from the United Kingdom to the United States, we ought to add the invisible exports in the form of services rendered to the United States

[1] Board of Trade Return, C. 6394 of 1891, pp. 71–97. The figures have been continued from the Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom.

by our ships, which do most of the United States carrying trade, and these must amount to many millions.[1]

We are therefore asked, looking to the United States alone, to sacrifice a trade which has in forty-one years grown from £51,000,000 to much more than £115,000,000, and which constitutes 23 per cent. of our imports, and, including shipping, much more than 11 per cent. of our exports, in order to obtain a larger share of a trade which has grown in the same period from £13,000,000 to no more than £19,000,000, and which now constitutes only $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. of our imports and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of our exports.

What sort of a bargain would this be for England?

'But,' it may be said, 'if the other self-governing colonies in Australia and Africa should join, the bargain may be worthy our acceptance.' Let us see how this stands.

Our yearly trade with these countries, on the average of the five years ending 1894, has been as follows[2]:—

IMPORTS INTO UNITED KINGDOM FROM AND EXPORTS OF BRITISH PRODUCE TO SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES.

Name of Colony.	Imports from.		Exports of British products to.	
	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Imports.	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Exports of British Produce.
Australian Colonies .	$30\frac{1}{2}$	7·3	20	8·4
Cape and Natal .	$5\frac{1}{2}$	1·4	8	3·6
Add Canada as above	13	3·1	7	3·0
Total . .	49	11·8	35	15

[1] In 1900, 11,738,000 tons of shipping were engaged in the direct trade between the United Kingdom and the United States, of which 10,162,000 were British, 541,000 American, and 1,035,000 foreign.—F. W. H.

[2] See Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom, and C. 7875 of 1895.

Compare this with the foreign trade which we are asked to sacrifice, the yearly amount of which is as follows, on an average of the same five years [1] :—

Imports into United Kingdom from all Foreign Countries.		Exports of British produce to all Foreign Countries.	
Million £.	Per cent. of Total Imports.	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Exports of British Produce.
323	77·1	156	66·5

But this is not all. It is not worth our while to make sacrifices to get the trade of Australia and the South African Colonies, for we have it already. Of the whole exports of those colonies, which are officially returned as amounting to £78,000,000 in 1894, £23,000,000 has to be deducted as being the home trade of the different Australian Colonies with one another. Of the remaining £55,000,000, the exports to the United Kingdom amounted to £45,000,000, and only £10,000,000 went to other countries. Again, the imports of these colonies, returned at 62½ millions in 1894, have to be reduced by 22½ millions, which represents Australian inter-Colonial trade, and of the 40 millions which remain, 30 millions were imports from the United Kingdom, and only 10 millions from the rest of the world.[2]

In the above comparison, India and the other British dependencies are of course excluded, because, as above stated, we control them, and there is no question of making treaties with them, and because we therefore already get from them all that free trade with them can give us.

There is much misapprehension about the proportions and the growth of our foreign and colonial trade. The maxim

[1] See Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom, and C. 7875 of 1895.

[2] See Statistical Abstract for the Colonies, C. 7904 of 1895.

that the 'Trade follows the Flag' is made to mean a great deal more than it really covers. Because, man for man, Englishmen buy more from Englishmen than they buy from other nations, it is supposed that the trade with the self-governing colonies is much more valuable than trade with other nations, and that it grows faster. Sentiment, even in buying and selling, goes for a great deal, and habit for more. Men buy what they have been used to buy, even in a foreign land. But profit made out of a Frenchman or a citizen of the United States is as much profit as profit made out of a Canadian. Now the real question for us, so far as the value of the trade is concerned, is not the amount of trade per man, but the aggregate amount of trade, including not only the actual amount of trade at the present moment, but the recent progress of trade, as indicating its probable future.

Comparative growth of foreign and colonial trade.

The following is an abstract from the valuable Tables presented to Parliament by the Board of Trade in 1891,[1] with the figures continued from the Statistical Abstract and the Board of Trade returns; and in considering them it is always to be remembered that the export figures do not include our 'invisible exports' arising from the services rendered by our shipping, estimated by Mr. Giffen fifteen years ago as then amounting to £60,000,000. The bulk of these would have to be set down to foreign trade, and the more so because Canada with her large mercantile marine does so much of her own carrying by sea.

[1] See Return C. 6394 of 1891, above referred to, pp. 71-79.

IMPORTS FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS, 1854 TO 1899.

Periods.	Imports from Foreign Countries.		Imports from British Possessions.	
	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Imports.	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Imports.
Annual Average—				
1855—1859 . .	129	76·5	40	23·5
1860—1864 . .	167	71·2	68	28·8
1865—1869 . .	218	76·0	68	24·0
1870—1874 . .	270	78·0	76	22·0
1875—1879 . .	292	77·9	83	22·1
1880—1884 . .	312	76·5	96	23·5
1885—1889 . .	293	77·1	87	22·9
1890—1894 . .	323	77·1	96	22·9
1895—1899 . .	355	78·0	98	21·6

EXPORTS OF BRITISH PRODUCE TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS, 1854 TO 1899.

Periods.	Exports to Foreign Countries.		Exports to British Possessions.	
	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Exports.	Million £.	Per cent. of Total Exports.
Annual Average—				
1855—1859 . .	79	68·5	37	31·5
1860—1864 . .	92	66·6	46	33·4
1865—1869 . .	131	72·4	50	27·6
1870—1874 . .	175	74·4	60	25·6
1875—1879 . .	135	66·9	67	33·1
1880—1884 . .	153	65·5	81	34·5
1885—1889 . .	147	65·0	79	35·0
1890—1894 . .	156	66·5	78	33·5
1895—1899 . .	158	66·0	81	34·0

It will be seen from these figures that, in spite of the foreign protective tariffs which have been coming into force during the last twenty or thirty years, and in spite of our largely increased trade with Australia and India, stimulated, no doubt, by our large lendings to those countries, the volume of foreign trade has kept pace with the volume of colonial trade; that the percentage of imports and exports due to each of those two branches have fluctuated within narrow limits, and are now [1896] much what they were thirty or forty years ago; and that our colonial trade is now, as it was then, about one-quarter of our whole trade, whilst our foreign trade constitutes the other three-quarters.

This is not what those would expect who prophesy ruin and isolation in consequence of the protective policy of foreign nations. But it is what those might expect who know that duties which profess to be protective often fail to protect, who teach that nations cannot sell without buying, and who hold with the maxim of the original free traders, 'Take care of the imports and the exports will take care of themselves.'

Is it, under such circumstances, wise to change our policy with the object of gaining a larger share of colonial trade? Would it not be the policy of fools to sacrifice a certain three-quarters to the chance of increasing one-quarter—to restrict and cripple a business of nearly £500,000,000 for the problematical chance of increasing a business of £170,000,000?

But, we are told, the proposed differential duty will be so small that it will not affect price. Our bread and our meat, our wool, and our sugar, will be as cheap as ever. Effect on prices. It is the old protectionist story, which we have heard a thousand times. But it passes even Mr. Chamberlain's cleverness to show how a differential duty can have the effect of shutting out foreign goods except by affecting price—*i.e. by making prices higher than they would have been if there had been no differential duty.* If the duty does not affect price it cannot have the desired result of shutting out foreign goods.

Moreover, it has been said by an authority, which is now classical,[1] that, 'among the other evils of the restrictive or protective system, not the least is, that the artificial protection of one branch of industry, or source of production, against foreign competition, is always set up as a ground of claim by other branches for similar protection; so that, if the reasoning upon which these restrictive or prohibitory regulations are founded were followed consistently, it would not stop short of excluding us from all foreign commerce whatsoever.'[2]

Protection means prohibition, and is insatiable.

And it is equally true that, whilst no protective duty ever began except on the specious plea that it should be small, the fact is that it has always ended in being heavy, complete, thorough, and onerous. If these things were true in 1820, they are much more certain now. They make up the recent story of protection in France, in Germany, and in the United States: and so it must always be where the principle of protection is once admitted. You cannot make a stand at 3 per cent., or 5 per cent., or 10 per cent., or 20 per cent. If your small duty is not sufficient to exclude and protect you must increase it until it is; and if you apply it to one article you must apply it to all. Protection is insatiable, and its progress never ceases until it becomes universal exclusion.

Now let us look at the proposal from the colonial point of view.

The colonies, Mr. Chamberlain assumes, are to maintain their respective duties upon foreign goods, but they are to interchange freely with the rest of the empire, and to place no protective duties on any product of British labour.

It is generally admitted that most of the colonies must raise a large part of their revenue by customs duties, since it is impossible for them to raise sufficient revenue by direct taxation. Now it does not seem to have struck Mr. Chamberlain

[1] Merchant's Petition, 1820.

[2] The Merchant's Petition will be found set out at the beginning of this volume.—F. W. H.

that it is perfectly impossible to distinguish between a duty imposed on any article for purposes of revenue and a protective duty on the same article, except by the means employed in this country—namely, by also imposing upon the same article, if made within the country, an excise duty corresponding to the duty on importation. If, for instance, we had no excise duty on home-made spirits, the duty on foreign spirits would at once be protective to the English distiller. Under the proposed scheme the colonies, who, it is admitted, must raise a large part of their revenue by customs duties, would have to admit articles of British production free from *protective* duties, whilst at the same time imposing protective duties on foreign articles. How, under such circumstances, would it be possible for them to maintain the freedom of all British produce by imposing an excise duty on their own home-made articles and at the same time to maintain a protective duty on the same articles when imported from foreign countries?

Consequences to the colonies.

Let us suppose, for instance, that steel rails (or any other article) are made in Canada, in Great Britain, and in the United States, and that steel rails are articles on which Canada must raise a duty. How is Canada at the same time to keep up her revenue, to admit steel rails from Great Britain free from protection, and to maintain protective duties against United States rails?

I believe the problem to be wholly insoluble.

Let us look at the proposal a little further.

The colony, it is assumed, must still raise a revenue by its duties, which must be such as, at the same time, to shut out the foreign article and to admit the British article. The British article, therefore, must pay a much smaller duty than at present, while the foreign article will be excluded. The article which pays little or no duty will possess the market; the article which pays a considerable duty will be excluded. Will the colony under such circumstances be able to raise sufficient revenue?

We shall all agree with Mr. Chamberlain that it would be a most desirable consummation to have no duties on British goods throughout the empire, or no duties which operate so as to protect one part of the empire against the rest. But, alas! this goes farther than the most ardent free traders have expected—farther than will probably, for generations to come, be practicable. All that we hope for is to see some approximation to such a consummation. To treat it as practicable, either at once or within any measurable time, is out of the question, for various reasons.

Free trade within the British Empire.

In the first place, it is, as above stated, impossible to distinguish between a duty imposed for revenue purposes and a protective duty, unless a corresponding excise tax is imposed. The colonies must, for some time at any rate, raise revenue by duties, and these duties can hardly fail to be, to some extent, protective. Again, no reasonable free trader wishes to see a system of protection which has been in force for many years, and under which industries of various kinds have grown up, abolished at a single blow. Such a step would be both unjust and unwise. What free traders desire is a much more moderate and a safer course. They wish to see the colonies abandon protection as a theory, and gradually reduce the most obnoxious of their present protective duties. This would probably, by increasing importation itself, increase revenue, and make further reductions possible. Gradually the colonies would thus approach, and ultimately attain, the state of things which obtains in the United Kingdom, without undue sacrifice of revenue, and without injustice to existing interests. But it is out of the question to do this except cautiously and by degrees, as, indeed, it was done in this country. This is what we may hope for under the new *régime* in Canada.[1]

But, it may be said, these are material interests—of the earth, earthy; and there are others to which it may be right

[1] See an excellent article on 'The Colonies,' p. 10, of the *Times* of 29th June, 1896.

that material interests should give way. There is National Defence; there is National Pride; there is the sentiment of a world-wide Empire; and the desire to spread the British name and the British language and British institutions over the face of the globe. Subtracting from these high-sounding words whatever element they may contain of aggressive Jingoism, of Jingoism which goes far to work retaliation in kind, there remains enough in them to move the blood, and even to lead captive the sober reason. Freedom itself may be appealed to, for freedom of trade is only one part of freedom, and not the most important. Freedom of thought, freedom of social and political action, are even more essential to general welfare than freedom of trade, and if these conflict with freedom of trade, it is freedom of trade which must give way. For this reason I dissent altogether from the late Lord Grey, who, in a recent pamphlet, regrets that in giving self-government to the colonies we did not compel them to adopt our own free-trade policy. The founders of the United States, aided as they were by geography, introduced freedom of trade throughout the union, and have by so doing established the widest area of free trade the world has ever known. But the facts of geography and of history which rendered it impossible in the last century for England to introduce her fiscal and commercial rules into New England, also rendered it impossible for her, when in the present century she gave self-government to her colonies, to compel them to adopt her present commercial and fiscal system. When self-government was extended to Canada, Australia, and the Cape, it necessarily carried with it to each colony the power to determine their own systems of taxation, of revenue, and of commercial policy.

Some political and sentimental considerations.

Free traders are not necessarily fanatics. If the doctrines of free trade are really in conflict with such ideas and aspirations as I have referred to, they may have to give way. Trade concerns material interests, whilst real friendship and harmony of feeling between English-speaking races (amongst whom I

should be ashamed not to include the United States) are objects for which it may be well worth while to make some sacrifice of such interests. But I am ready to take issue with the commercial federationists on this view of the question, and I challenge the advocates of protection to show that the steps they urge will promote the harmony we both desire. I believe, on the contrary, that they will have a directly opposite effect.

There is nothing so dangerous to friendly feeling as the consciousness of an obligation which is felt to be a daily cause of injury or loss. No wise men or women, and no wise communities, who desire to be on friendly terms with each other, will willingly involve themselves in any such obligations. Nor will they do so, if the conditions are such that the engagement, though possibly for the moment advantageous, will probably in the future become a burden.

Now, this is the case with all the schemes of commercial federation that have been suggested, and, amongst others, with that suggested by Mr. Chamberlain. It is a scheme of increased restriction, and this raises a *primâ facie* case against it. Let us consider it in its application to particular cases; for it is thus alone that we can test it.

England is asked to put a differential duty on foreign produce, *i.e.* on food and raw materials, which is the produce of the United States and of other foreign countries; in other words, to exclude these articles when coming from foreign countries, including the United States, in order to encourage imports from the colonies, including Canada. It has been shown above what a tremendous sacrifice this involves on the part of England. It has been shown that to buyers in the United Kingdom it must make food and raw material dearer or more difficult to obtain than they would otherwise be, and that it must consequently narrow the means of living and cripple our manufactures and our exports.

Will it conduce to friendly feelings in this country towards Canada, if our working classes are told that their food is dearer, or that their employment is lessened, in order to give more profit

or more employment to the landowners and farmers of Canada? And supposing, as is more than probable, that the United States should retaliate and exclude the thirty millions' worth of manufactured goods and the many millions' worth of shipping services which we send them, will the loss of that profit and employment make Canada and her people dearer to our manufacturers and our workmen?

Nor is this all. The whole commercial system of the world is in a state of flux. Many persons think that there will be a general revulsion from the protectionist craze which now afflicts the nations. It is quite on the cards that such a revulsion may come in the United States. Suppose that it were to come, and that, as was the case with ourselves, the first form it were to take was that of reciprocity. Suppose the United States Government were to come to ours and say, 'We will open our markets to you, but it is only on condition that your markets are open to us.' And suppose that our Government were obliged to answer, 'No, thank you. Much as we should like your market, we cannot accept it, for we have made engagements with Canada by which we are bound to keep your goods out of our market.' Is it possible to conceive anything more likely to make Englishmen say, what I devoutly trust they may never have reason to say, 'Perish, Canada!'

Look again at the case from the Canadian side. Nature and geography seem to have made the United States and Canada for mutual intercourse. These two nations have set up barriers against one another, which one party in Canada has treated as an intolerable burden, and which even the other party (the party which is responsible for them) has been in vain trying to lower by negotiation with the United States. Now, suppose that Canada has been bound by arrangement with England to exclude United States goods in order to favour English goods, and suppose that the free traders of Canada had been able to say to the electors of Canada, 'You sorely want trade with the United States; but they will not give it you till you admit their goods freely. This you cannot do because

you are bound by your engagements with England to exclude United States goods.' Unless Canadians are made of different stuff from other men, such a cry would enable the free-trading party in Canada to sweep the board, with what feelings towards the mother country, and with what result on the connection between her and the colony, it is painful to imagine!

Further, suppose that such an arrangement could now be made, and that it proved for a time completely successful, and that by a system of *quasi* monopoly, we were to nurse up a system of industries in Canada which could not have existed in the face of United States competition; and suppose that there was then to occur that revulsion in the commercial policy of the United States of which I have spoken—that their Government were to offer a free market to England, on condition of England's offering a free market to them; and that England, as it probably would do, were to accept their proposal. Would not the result be ruinous competition and injury to the Canadian interests which we had artificially fostered? And if so, what would be the feelings of Canada towards the mother country?

I have taken these hypothetical cases as illustrations—and they might be multiplied indefinitely. But they are enough to show what dangers to friendship lie in any restrictions which either party may, now or hereafter, feel to be injurious.

It would be easy to dilate on these difficulties *ad infinitum*. They are so great as to make it justifiable to come to a general and absolute conclusion that no scheme can possibly be proposed on Mr. Chamberlain's lines which is not open to fatal objections.

But it is not necessary to dogmatize. Let Mr. Chamberlain and his Canadian friends, instead of concealing their meaning in vague generalities, condescend on a specific scheme, and we shall be ready to meet it, to receive it with welcome if practicable, but to condemn it unreservedly if it is as objectionable as all schemes hitherto proposed have been shown to be.

The promoters of Imperial Federation do not appear to recognize the obvious historical fact that the present excellent and improving relations between the mother country and the colonies have been brought about by the wise statesmanship which recognized that freedom is the greatest of boons—that it is greater even than free trade; that the best way to create good feeling is to remove legal obligations which gall both or either of the parties; and that *to re-impose such obligations would be to endanger the good feeling which has been created.*

PART V

SOCIAL REFORM

I.—COBDEN ON EDUCATION

On May 22nd, 1851, W. J. Fox, then member for Oldham, moved—'That it is expedient to promote the Education of the People of England and Wales, by the establishment of Free Schools for secular instruction, to be supported by local rates, and managed by committees, elected specially for that purpose by the ratepayers.' The motion was supported by Cobden in the following speech, from which a portion is omitted. The motion was defeated by a large majority. Fox's Bill to promote Secular Education may be found in the fourth volume of his collected works.

Now, before the House decides upon the subject, it is, in my opinion, right that we should examine the statistics which are before us. Let us, in particular, look to the amount of money which we have granted for educational purposes. For the last five years we have had a grant of £125,000 a year, while there has been but a very trifling increase on the population, and scarcely any to the persons who have received education in consequence of the State grant. And why? Because it is a subject that the Government dare not touch in this House; because the present system is so unsatisfactory, that, in spite of two large blue-books of correspondence and minutes, and an expenditure of £125,000 per annum, the little education we do get in this country is owing to the efforts of the committee of Privy Council; and I do not blame them for those efforts; but I honour them for trying to do that which cannot be done in this House. No one knows better than Government does that it dares not stir the question with a view of getting a grant commensurate with the wants of the country, in order to carry out the system which at

present exists. And now what is it that Government is falling back upon? A local scheme in Manchester, which has already failed in precisely the same way as the Government plan has failed on these religious difficulties. The gentlemen who came to town from Manchester did me also the honour of calling upon me; and I rejoiced to see them endeavouring to overcome the difficulties of realizing a system of education. They told me, as they told the right honourable gentleman the Home Secretary, that they had the concurrence of all the religious sects—that the Roman Catholics had joined them as well as the Dissenters; but I received a letter from them, after their return to Manchester, that, to their surprise and regret, they had to tell me that not two of the Roman Catholic clergy, as the honourable and learned gentleman had stated, but eighteen, virtually the whole body of the Roman Catholic clergy in that town, had seceded from that plan of education. And why? Simply because the committee that met in Manchester made it a fundamental principle of their scheme, that in all schools erected at the public expense in Manchester the authorized version of the Bible should be read; and that being a condition which the Roman Catholics could not comply with, that, of course, separated them altogether from this plan of education.

Now, I ask any one in this House, if any plan of public education can be satisfactory in the boroughs of Manchester and Salford combined, which excludes the poorest of the poor classes? There are in Manchester and Salford at least 100,000 Roman Catholics. They are the poorest of the population; and, if ignorance be an evil, they are the most dangerous part of the population to be left in ignorance. And yet this is a plan on which the right honourable gentleman the Home Secretary relies, in order to relieve him from the difficulty he is in. They are in precisely the same difficulty in Manchester that we are in this House; for I maintain that the little good that is done was done surreptitiously by the Educational Committee of the Privy Council, and not by a

vote in this House. What are the minutes of the Privy Council? Do you suppose they represent the debates in this House any more than they do the motion of my honourable friend (W. J. Fox)? Bring forward a vote for the maintenance of Roman Catholic colleges, in which they will be allowed to carry on in their own peculiar way their own doctrines and worship, and do you think that such a vote will pass this House? There is a fundamental evasion and fallacy about the whole of this educational vote. I ask you, when you talk so much of religious education, if this £125,000 is for religious teaching?—because I understood, when we were passing an educational vote, it was not for religious education. When the vote was first agreed to, in 1834, it was called school-money; it was £10,000 or £20,000 to begin with. Afterwards it was changed to a vote for education; but you did not vote the money for religious education. Could you vote any sum in this House, if it were asked fairly for religious instruction? No, it could not be done; and it could not be done for many years past, and never more shall we vote any money in this House as an endowment for religion; and, therefore, when you talk to me about voting for religious education, I say it is not an accurate description of what we vote it for.

The honourable and learned gentleman the Solicitor-General has talked as if there were some great conspiracy in the country—as if there were some parties aiming to deprive the country of its religious faith; and he seems to assume that, if we allow schools to be established without religious teaching, they would practically be establishing schools to teach infidelity; and he also says, that by establishing schools for secular education without religion, we are, in fact, divorcing morality and religion from education. Now, when the honourable and learned gentleman rung the changes about advancing the attributes of our nature, and of promoting the intellectual qualities at the expense of the religious and moral, he might surely give us credit for knowing that it was practically

impossible to do anything of the kind. We know that religion is a part of moral training as well as the honourable and learned gentleman does; but what we say is, that there is ample provision in this country already for religious training. There is twice as much spent in this country for religious training as there is in any other country in the world. Then how can it be said that we should exclude religion from education? I want to do nothing of the kind.

Again; we have been taunted with the use of the word 'secular.' Well, I do not know any other word we could use. I say once for all, I consider there is provision made for religious training, but not for secular training, and therefore I wish to provide for secular education. I want people to be able to read and write—to be able to write their names when they sign a contract, or register the birth of their children; I want people to be trained in habits of thought and forethought; and I do not know any other term than 'secular' for this kind of education. But why ring the changes upon secular education? I say, once for all, that I am not opposed to the Bible, or any other religious book, being read in schools.

What I want is, to have the same system of education in England that they have in Massachusetts, in the United States of America. I will not go to Louisiana or Georgia, but my system is that of Massachusetts; and I challenge honourable gentlemen to test that system by the experience of that State, and the good it has effected there. That State is not open to the argument that it was a thinly peopled country: it is an old country, and one which sends forth vast numbers of emigrants; the people are of our own race, and have our own habits; and I want to know why we cannot adopt the same plan in England that they have adopted with success in Massachusetts? We have just now a competition with all the world in the production of that which ministers to the comforts of mankind. If we see the result of ingenuity in any part of the world, we plume ourselves that we can imitate it. If we go to the

Great Exhibition, and find a machine there, however cunningly it may be contrived, we shall find men say that what is done in Boston, in America, we can do in England. But if we adopt the Massachusetts system of education, you say it will make the people an irreligious people. I will meet you on that ground. I have been in Massachusetts, and, testing them by any test you may wish—by the number of their churches, by the number of attendants at their churches, by the amount paid for the teaching of religion, by the attendance at Sunday-schools, by the observance of the Sabbath, by the respect paid to religious teachers, by any one test with regard to religion—I can challenge a comparison between Massachusetts and any part of England.

Well, then, the system of education adopted in Massachusetts is a secular system; and do they prevent the children from reading the Bible? Why, I venture to say, that in the report which I hold in my hand of the Board of Education in Massachusetts, there is not a single word about religion from beginning to end; and yet, probably, there is not one in a hundred of these schools where the Bible is not read. I have no objection to a parish having local management having the Bible in its schools as well as any other book; but what they do in Massachusetts we should do here, by saying, as a fundamental principle, no book shall be admitted into the common school which favours the peculiar doctrines of any Christian sect. Well, now, with a people so jealous of their religious independence as the people of Massachusetts are, what they had been able to do surely we can do in England. They had the same battle to go through there that we have. In Massachusetts, originally, they taught the Catechism in their schools, which had been taken there by the Pilgrim Fathers when they left England, and who carried with them as much intolerance almost as they left behind; but another system now prevails, and with the greatest possible advantage.

Practically, I believe that system will work as well in this country as it does in Massachusetts; and if the system

proposed by my honourable friend the member for Oldham were carried out, I am persuaded that in ninety-nine out of a hundred of the parishes in England, nobody would object to the Bible being read in the schools, provided it were read without note or comment. In a vast proportion of these parishes there are no Roman Catholics; but I have that opinion of the good sense and rational conduct of men, that, if there were a very small minority—if there were a few families of Roman Catholics who objected to the reading of the Bible—the reading of it could be so adapted to particular times as not to interfere with any one's religious conviction, and in a way that would exclude nobody.

I believe that when the system of free schools is adopted, such will be the estimation in which education will be held by the mass of the people, that it will not be easy to keep children from the schools. Where is the difficulty of our doing what has been done in Massachusetts? I will not be driven from that ground. Give me the Massachusetts plan. I declare my belief, that the mass of the people in Massachusetts are as superior in intelligence to the population of Kent, as the latter are to the people of Naples. I say this advisedly. I ask, then, why we cannot have this system in England. Will you tell me it is on account of the Established Church? Why, surely, having an Established Church with a very rich endowment, which supplies a clergyman to every parish, and the means of religious instruction to the mass of the people—for the mass of the people has religious instruction without paying a farthing for it in the rural parishes—will you tell me, having this advantage, you could not maintain your ground against another people, who have left religion to voluntary effort, and who have endowed their secular schools?

Now, there has been an objection made that this scheme is intended to supersede existing school-rooms; it has been assumed that the plan of my honourable friend (W. J. Fox) must necessarily throw to waste all existing schools belonging to places of worship. I see no necessity for that at all. I

consider that we may make use of the existing school-rooms, as well for this system as for any other, and I never contemplated such a waste as to render useless existing school-rooms. The honourable and learned gentleman the Solicitor-General has told us, and the right honourable gentleman the Secretary of State for Home Affairs is of the same opinion, that if we adopt this plan of secular education we shall shut up all the other schools. That is an admission by the way, that we are going to establish something better than the old system. But they went further, and said, when we shut up the schools we shall deprive the people of religious education, because the great bulk of the people get no religious instruction now, except what they get in their schools.

When my honourable friend the member for Tavistock (Trelawny) ejaculated, 'What are the clergy doing?' I thought that was a natural exclamation. We pay £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 a year to the clergy, and it is rather a bold thing for a devotee of the Church to say, if the children do not get religious training in the schools, they will get no religious training at all. The honourable and learned gentleman the Solicitor-General, when he answered that ejaculation of the honourable member for Tavistock, turned immediately to the manufacturing hives, where, from increase of population, he says, there is much ignorance. I beg the honourable and learned gentleman's pardon; but the great mass of ignorance is not in the manufacturing towns but in the rural districts. I admit, indeed, that there is much ignorance in the manufacturing districts, but it is because the surplus population of the agricultural districts go to the manufacturing districts. I do not blame the clergy for being the cause of that ignorance in secular matters, although I think there is a great deal to be said as to the duty of the clergy to see that all persons in their parishes can read, inasmuch as I cannot see how a person can be a Protestant at all who cannot read; yet I do not attempt to fasten upon the clergy all the responsibility for the ignorance that exists in the country parishes. I know that in many

districts they have undertaken more than any one else for the cause of education, and I know that they find great difficulty in maintaining their schools by voluntary efforts in some places. In many rural parishes, three-fourths of the land is owned by absentees, and the clergy have very little chance of getting support from absentee landed proprietors.

How, then, are we to raise the funds to maintain the schools? I want a plan by which, for the purposes of secular education, a parish would be able to rate property. Let property be rated, and each proprietor, whether he were an absentee or resident, would contribute towards the education of the people. I am firmly convinced that money cannot be better applied in any of the small rural parishes than in providing good secular education. By such an education, the people will gain self-reliance and self-respect. Let them be taught a little geography; let them learn what is going on in other parts of the world—what, for example, is the rate of wages in the colonies—and they will not then rot in parishes where they are a burden on the poor-rates. £80 or £100 a year laid out on education in a rural parish will do more to keep down the poor-rates, and to prevent crime, than the same amount expended in any other way.

I cannot help expressing the great gratification which I feel at the difference between the tone of the discussion this evening, and the tone of the debate last year. For my own part, I must say that there is no other subject on which I feel so tolerant towards everybody as I do on this subject of education. If I see the Government doing something—I care not how—I am grateful for it. If I see honourable gentlemen opposite—whether High Church or Low Church—trying to secure for the people a better education, I thank them. I see the enormous difficulty of taking any combined step, owing to the religious element, which always stands in the way. If ever there be a time, however, when it is necessary for parties to combine in a system of secular education, apart from religious sects, the present is such a time; for no one can deny that

never before was there so much strife and disunion amongst different religious bodies. The honourable member for Stockport (Heald) belongs to a religious community which is torn in twain. Is there to be one set of schools for the reformed, and another for the old Wesleyans? As a matter of economy—as a matter of charity, good-will, and kindness—let us all try to get on neutral ground; let us try to do so, not only on account of the good which will thus be done to the mass of the people of this country, who will never be educated under any other system, but in order that we may have an opportunity of meeting, as it were, out of the pale of those religious strifes which are now more threatening than ever.

II.—THE END AND AIM OF POLITICS

The following extract is taken from a speech by W. J. Fox, delivered at Royton to some of his Oldham constituents, on February 12th, 1853.

In speaking to you on the present occasion, I labour under one disadvantage. I have already addressed two very large meetings in the borough of Oldham. I have forestalled much which I might have said to you on the present occasion; and I have no wish to repeat here what I have already said in another place; but as on those two occasions I adverted to various points of political interest;—as the circumstances of those meetings, and the addresses delivered to me, and the presents made to me, led me to speak of the place of woman in society, of the influence she was qualified to exert, and of the influence which she ought to possess;—as they led me to speak of the general cause of reform and its advocates, of their history, and of their prospects;—as they led me to enter into the subject of education in its various phases, and especially in its relation to and its connection with the suffrage;—as I had also occasion at those meetings to speak of labour, its duties and its rights—to speak of it as the lot of a large portion of humanity, but as a lot which had been manfully endured, and would be working out, as I trust, its own way to improvement, physical, mental, and moral;—as I had to speak of excessive labour, and of my wish for its being reduced so that all might have the opportunity for mental culture as well as for reasonable enjoyment;—I shall pass by those topics on the present occasion, and address myself to that which relates to all of them indeed—namely, to the very spirit and essence

of political institutions—to the motive of political zeal—to that which I deem more important than any of the external paraphernalia of mere institutions.

I say, then, that in my view the great end and aim of all politics—the reason why any rational or good man should meddle with politics—is this, that they should be rendered subservient to the development of humanity—to the maturing of man in mind and body, spirit and circumstances; to the making of man—I speak of man and woman under the generic term—all that the great Creator intended him to be and has formed him capable of being. And I believe that every human being that comes into the world has, as the motto of the ring they gave me at Oldham expressed it, education for his or her birthright. I believe that we are entitled to it by the dispensations of nature and of Providence, and that every one in society who bears his part as a citizen is fairly and inherently entitled to his share in the management of the concerns of the community of which he is a member. But why is all this? It is that men and women should be more happy as men and women, not as beasts of burden, or beasts of the field, and still less as brutes and savages of the forest. It is that they may show the intellectual powers and the moral dispositions which belong to our common nature; those which it should be the object of all political arrangements and of all institutions to bring to full maturity—that we may say of each, as was said of Brutus in Shakespeare's play of *Julius Cæsar*—

> 'His life was gentle; and the elements
> So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
> And say to all the world, This was a man.'

Well, now, this is not the object of many forms of government; but I say it is the test by which they should be tried. I say that it is my motive for embarking with so much earnestness in a political career. I say it is that by which we may bring to trial the different systems of government. What does

the Emperor of Austria or the Czar of Russia think man was made for? Why, he holds

> 'The monstrous faith of millions made for one;'

he thinks men were made to be his soldiers, his servants, his slaves. Millions have died that one man might be called lord; millions have pined in bondage that one might believe that he holds the sceptre of dominion over boundless regions, and that the human beings that live upon the soil are but as so many insects crawling upon the earth in his august presence. Well, I say that human beings cannot thrive under such an arrangement. Humanity sinks, shrivels up, becomes a poor and a despicable thing.

Well, then, there is another theory of politics; and that is, that if we do not exist for one, we exist for a few. There are certain privileged classes whose minds are to be loaded with all the accomplishment and learning of the time; whose houses are to be adorned with all that is grand and beautiful; who are to be the hereditary leaders and chieftains of that portion of the human race which is found in the country where they dwell. This is the old feudal system, by which one man is to be nourished as in a hothouse to an unnatural degree of expansion, while all the rest are left to 'bide the pelting of the pitiless storm' as they may, and are to be only an inferior caste in his presence. It was on such a theory as this that a member of the late Government, in his juvenile days, spoke out a sentiment of which I hope he has lived to be ashamed, but which expresses the political theory that many still hold—I allude to those memorable lines by Lord John Manners, in which he exclams—

Political theories.

> 'Let laws and learning, art and science, die;
> But leave us still our old nobility.'

Well, I believe we could do much better without our 'old nobility' than without law and learning, and art and science.

There is still another theory, which gives, I think, too low

an estimate of government and of politics—I mean that of Edmund Burke, who, in his great admiration of our judicial institutions, says that the whole Constitution of England—I do not remember his exact words, but I know I quote the sentiment correctly—King, and Lords and Commons, Church and State—all exist to put twelve honest men into a jury-box. Well, the putting of twelve men into a jury-box is a very desirable thing, especially in times of political persecution; it is our best shield against arbitrary authority; and it is a good thing that our institutions accomplish that; but that is not the whole great object of human life. Government, society, institutions, are surely meant for something better than mere police work—merely to keep one man from picking another's pocket, or breaking his head. It is well that they should do this; but that is not enough.

There is still another theory of society—that of the late wit, Sydney Smith, who said that roast mutton and claret were the great end and object of all government, law, and order. Well, that is a very pleasant theory to the people who can enjoy the roast mutton and claret; but how is it to those who find a difficulty in getting any kind of meat, or beer with it, in order to support their existence?

I can never believe but that men are united in society for some better purpose than any of these. They are united in order that they may perform that great work of co-operation which, on a small scale, achieves so many beneficial results, and which a nation should, I think, exhibit on a large scale in all its institutions. So that I have gone into politics with this question constantly in my mind—What will your theories, your forms, your propositions, do for human nature? Will they make man more manly? Will they raise men and women in the scale of creation? Will they lift them above the brutes? Will they call forth their thoughts, their feelings, their actions? Will they make them moral beings? Will they be worthy to tread the earth as children of the common Parent, and to look forward, not only for His blessing here,

but for His benignant bestowment of happiness hereafter? If institutions do this, I applaud them; if they have lower aims, I despise them; and if they have antagonistic aims, I counteract them with all my might and strength.

Well, now, let us apply this—let us see how it works. I am very partial to democratic institutions. I want to see a country governed by its inhabitants—not by one man, a few men, or a privileged class; and governed for the high and noble purposes I have endeavoured to describe. Well, I say democratic institutions are favourable to this. I say that they call forth all a man's best feelings, and his highest aspirations, and his noblest purposes—not for their own sakes, but on account of their tendency. I should not care about what we Radical reformers contend for, if all these changes which we seek were to end in themselves. Whether a man votes by ballot, putting an envelope into a box, or whether he answers a question at the hustings, and gives his vote openly—in fact, whether he votes at all or not—whether government be representative or be arbitrary,—I say that these things are comparatively worthless. It is as means that they are good, and not as ends; and I say that as means they are good. I say that when a man feels that he is recognized as a citizen—that he is not a serf, not one of a slave class—that he can walk abroad, and can exercise his due share in the nomination of those who make the laws—that he has not only the bounden obligation upon him to obey those laws, but that he has also his art and part even in the making of them by the machinery of representation; I say, when a man feels this, it makes him more a man than he was before; it teaches him to respect and venerate himself; it tends even to make him feel that violence, that falsehood, that corrupt arts, are unworthy of him; and that, being a free citizen, he should act like a free citizen, and only do that which may become a man. What is the tendency of slavery? Why, to strip a man of all the best virtues that adorn a man's nature. If a slave has virtues, what are they? —the virtues of a dog rather than of a man! He may be

faithful to his owner, he may be obedient and tractable; he may fetch and carry when he is bid; and what then? Is this what man was made for? Can we show nothing higher, nothing better than this? I say, yes! And democracy is to do this for us, teaching us that we are all born free and equal, and, in the words of one of our ancient sovereigns, that 'laws which bind all, should be assented to by all.' Now, there are many people who are not looking to this tendency of democracy, and they say, if we had a perfect despot—a despot very wise and very benevolent—that would be better for us than democracy. I say, no; because, suppose the despot does go right as to the external matters of the country, or its material interests at home, and suppose the representative government does blunder—suppose the people make mistakes, and have to reconsider what they have done, and to retrace their path—still, there is this difference between the worst form of democracy and the best form of despotism—that under the despot man has not that self-respect which the self-government of a nation imparts to all who belong to that nation. You cannot give him this under a despotism, though it were the despotism of an angel or an archangel. You cannot do this. He is but a child in leading-strings, instead of a man walking straight forward in his own course, guided by his own intellect, which, if it errs, corrects itself by its errors.

Well, I apply this test to other things. I apply it to the free-trade doctrines. I say, Are those doctrines tending to raise and purify and benefit humanity? Well, I find my justification in the way they used to be attacked. What was the language of protectionists a few years ago against free traders? They said, 'You will benefit the foreigner;' or, 'If you do this, the foreigner will profit by it.' 'Levy a tax upon corn, as it will be paid by the foreigner.' They would have taught the people of this country, in the very teeth of religion, that they were to consider the foreigner as an enemy; that it was an objection to anything that it would benefit the foreigner. I trust the

Free-trade doctrine.

working people of this country have rejected and thrust from them such unchristian doctrines as these—such selfish and malevolent feelings. Why, it is one of the beauties of free trade, that if we benefit the foreigner, we benefit ourselves. If the foreigner can produce something we want, and if we can produce something which the foreigner wants, then the man who endeavours to prevent the exchange of those articles is an enemy of the human race. He opposes their material interests as well as their moral feelings. He subjects them to privation where they might have abundance; and he teaches them selfishness and enmity, where they ought to feel brotherly regard, and a common interest, and a delight in the prospect of a common course of prosperity. Well has that working man, who laboured in iron and other metals, who became the poet of the poor—I mean Ebenezer Elliott, the author of the 'Corn Law Rhymes,' who saw so much further than so many of his class at that time, and who spoke to them so emphatically on this matter—well has he sung, in one of his odes—

> 'Free trade like that hath doctrines of love,
> And the blessing of plenty and health;
> And proclaims, while the angels look down from above,
> The marriage of labour and wealth.'

I believe that such are the arrangements of nature and Providence, that the freest intercommunication between different states is alike good for all the states concerned in it, and for the different classes of society in each and all those states. What is the end of Providence? Look abroad on the world. See how different climates produce different fruits. See how their varied productions are such, that the inhabitants of one region may reasonably be desirous to have possession of those which are produced in another region. See the infinite diversity, see the changes which a single article has to undergo—how it has to pass from country to country in order to obtain that final shape and form in which it best ministers to humanity. Look at the silkworm spinning

her cocoons in the trees of Lebanon. Look at the cotton-plants, rich in their white blossoms, in the fair South of America. Why, their products cross the broad Atlantic—they come here; they are subject to your various industrial operations, and then they go back again, in order to clothe even the natives of the very country from which they came—to give them their garments: and when those garments are worn out, these very articles sometimes undergo another change; they take the form of paper, and circulate through the world the lessons of intelligence and of wisdom. I say, that free trade is a providential doctrine. It teaches us the wisdom of those arrangements by which nations may ultimately, we trust, be led into one great confederation, one brotherhood of communities, rendering and receiving mutual service.

Well, then, again, I test by this principle the influence of systems and of institutions and of policies which are favourable to knowledge on the one hand, or promotive of ignorance on the other. Try them, I say. Despotic countries always pursue a system which tends to shut out knowledge from the minds of the subjects of the despot. The late Emperor of Austria did not like new ideas. His successor, I dare say, has the same antipathy. Despots never do like new ideas, or any ideas at all, but the ideas of their power and grandeur, and of subserviency to their greatness. But spread knowledge over a nation, and what is the result? Governments assume a truer and more beneficial form; that mighty power called public opinion is created—a power which cannons cannot batter down—which bayonets cannot stab to death—which no might of princes, potentates, or armies can bring to nothing—which holds on its course in spite of all, and in due time will be sure to triumph over all.

On this principle I prefer the peace policy to a war policy. I judge them by the contrast they afford. This country has had experience of both. From 1790 to 1815 we had experience of a war policy. From 1815 to the present

Peace and war.

time we have had experience of a peace policy. What is the difference between 1790 and 1815? How many reforms were effected? how many wise and good laws were passed, for which, at this moment, you are blessing the authors? What was done, what was felt, while the war-whoop resounded through the nation? Benevolence was a thing almost to be laughed to scorn. Hatred of the French, who were called our national enemies, was burning in the minds of the great majority. The few who protested were subjected to insult, to outrage, to rioting; some of them confined for years, only for wishing to make their fellow-creatures wiser and better; others driven from their country into exile;—and the only relief to these was the blaze of illuminations, darkened by the mourning which so many families in all our large towns had to wear for relatives who had fallen in the battle. Oh, scarcely a soil was there on the face of the earth that was not fertilized by British blood; not a famous river, or a sea, that was not discoloured and stained by British blood; while treasure was poured forth like water, and the country had an enormous burden of debt left upon it that will take many a long generation yet to wipe away. . . .

III.—THE MALT TAX, TEMPERANCE, AND RETRENCHMENT

This interesting speech was delivered by Cobden on April 14th, 1864, and was one of his last speeches in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone abolished the malt tax in 1880.

I LISTENED to the speech of my honourable and gallant friend—and I may say my representative—who opened this debate, with great pleasure. He brought forward his motion with much ability, and I have not a word to say in opposition to the views he advocates. But as an experienced agitator, I must be allowed to tell him that he has erred grievously in the mode in which he has introduced this subject for the first time formally to the House. There is no rule more deserving the attention of any one who takes charge of a question in this House than this—that he should never allow it to jostle or to become entangled with another question, good in itself, but with which it has no necessary connection. The mode in which his motion is introduced into the House is such as absolutely to preclude a fair division upon its merits; because my honourable and gallant friend asks the House to consider not merely the merit of the malt tax, but the merits of another tax which he proposes to remove out of the way in order that the malt tax may occupy its place. With regard to the sugar duty, looking at the matter only as a question for the consumer —although I am not going to deal with the malt tax solely in the light of a consumer's tax—I confess I should infinitely prefer abolishing the sugar duty to abolishing the malt tax. Perhaps there is no tax—after the tax on bread—upon which there may be so much said to justify total

The claims of sugar.

repeal as the duty on sugar. We live in a country where we have not so much of the sun's rays as more southern climes are favoured with. We know that it is the solar heat which bestows sugar upon the earth, and the consequence is that our fruits want the flavour which in other and more genial climes they possess. We require, therefore, more sugar as an admixture to our food. Again, the people of this country are large consumers of tea. We are denied the wine which they have in France and other countries, and the people consequently drink tea in larger quantities than any other in Europe. That consumption of tea implies the necessity of the consumption of sugar. Then, again, sugar appeals to the sympathies of all—not merely to the working man, for whose benefit alone, in seeking for a reduction of the malt tax, our sympathies are involved, but to his wife and children—not merely to the man in health, but to the invalid and to helpless infancy. I am very sorry, therefore, that this question, which is most important in itself, and excites so much interest, has been injudiciously complicated with another question, so as to deprive us of a fair vote upon its merits.

In dealing with the malt tax, I said I would not regard it solely as a consumer's question. Standing here as an advocate of free trade, and having applied free-trade principles with so much rigour to the farmer and the landowner, whom I will not separate in this matter, I am fairly bound to admit that, if they come before this House and state that the operation of the malt tax is such as to impede the processes of scientific husbandry, and to interfere with the most desirable rotation of crops—that if they establish the truth of that upon the judgment of practical farmers—this is a question that affects the interests of the producer as well as the interests of the consumer. I am bound to say that we have never lost sight of the producer in the great changes which we have been effecting in our fiscal system during the last twenty years. We all know that Sir Robert Peel began his commercial reforms, which have been followed up to the

The malt tax and free agriculture.

present day, by laying down and acting upon the maxim, that it was necessary, before exposing the manufacturers of this country to competition with the manufacturers of the rest of the world, to relieve them in every possible way from all disadvantages in the supply of their raw material and in the processes of manufacture. I was surprised that the honourable baronet the member for the West Riding (Sir F. Crossley), in his speech, rather lost sight of this principle which we have always claimed in the interests of the manufacturer. He said, that as the farmers of this country did not produce sufficient barley for its consumption they were not entitled to the removal of the difficulty and impediment which the malt tax imposed upon them. I consider that the fact that they do not produce enough of barley for this country is no argument why they should not have the full application of the economical fiscal system which we have been carrying out for the last twenty years. We admit the foreigner to free competition with them; the foreigner may not have this malt tax to interfere with his husbandry; and therefore I repeat it is no sufficient answer to say that the landowners and farmers of this country do not produce the full quantity of barley necessary for the consumption of the people. The question really is: What is the force and validity of the plea put forward by the producer? I have inquired of the most intelligent farmers with whom I am acquainted, and I will mention one because he lives in a county which has lately been the theatre of a great contest turning upon this question. I have had the great pleasure and advantage of being acquainted with Mr. Lattimore, one of the best farmers in Hertfordshire, for more than twenty-two years. He stood by my side at the commencement of the movement for free trade in corn, and much to his credit and greatly in proof of his enlightenment, was always an advocate of that principle. Mr. Lattimore is now one of the most ardent advocates of the removal of the malt tax; and, as one to whom I owe more than to any one for the information I acquired with reference to agriculture and its bearing upon

free trade, I cannot but regard with the greatest respect the evidence he offers me upon the subject. Mr. Lattimore has stated publicly—and I believe he has stated to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister—that the operation of the malt tax tends to interfere with the proper and judicious rotation of crops. Some soils are not so well suited as others for the growth of barley. Thus, taking Norfolk, where the soil is of a superior character for the growth of barley, and then taking those districts where the soil is not peculiarly suited for that kind of grain, and where the crop is of an inferior quality, you cannot sell that inferior barley for malting purposes, because the duty being the same upon barley of high quality as of low quality, it acts as a prohibitory duty in the sale of inferior grain for malt. Besides that, Mr. Lattimore tells me that he finds malt a necessary article for the consumption of stock, particularly lambs and sheep, at particular seasons. I have visited his farm, and I have seen his lambs at Easter season feeding upon malt dust brought from Ware. He was at that time paying, weight for weight, as much for his malt dust as he was selling his wheat for; and he tells me that he has been obliged to abandon the purchase of this malt dust, because it was so dear that he could no longer use it. I take the evidence of such men to be conclusive in the matter. The farmers stand, in my opinion, precisely in the same position with regard to barley, from which the malt is made, as they did with regard to hops before the hop duty was repealed. We all know that in Kent a very superior quality of hops is grown, and that in Sussex the quality is inferior. The duty being the same in both cases, its effect was to operate most oppressively upon the inferior quality of hops grown in Sussex. It was, in fact, a protective duty upon the superior hops grown in Kent; and it was on that ground that the hop-growers raised an agitation for the repeal of the duty. It was not an agitation in which the consumers were the movers. The movement originated exclusively with the hop-growers of Sussex, because they wanted to escape from the severe disadvantage

under which they were labouring in consequence of the duties pressing upon them so heavily. Such is the position in which the farmer is now placed, and it appears to me that he has good grounds to come here and ask that the trade in malt should be made free, as a complement to those free-trade measures and that economical policy which have been enforced in every other direction during the last twenty years. It may be said that there has been a measure proposed for the purpose of enabling malt to be manufactured for the consumption of cattle. Well, I believe it is generally understood that that device will be a failure. I believe the farmers attach very little importance to it. But, independently of regarding the question merely as a consumer's question, I maintain that it would be a great relief to the very poorest part of the community, because I think the consumption of beer, probably more than of any other article, belongs to the very poorest of our labourers—I now speak of the male labourers more than any other. I am of this opinion, because all of us who are acquainted with rural life know that, if they could, the agricultural labourers of this country would all enjoy the beverage of beer. With their limited wages, and with the general habit of agricultural labourers to be married men, I think there is very small danger of these men ever carrying the indulgence too far. But, depend upon it, it would contribute very much to the contentment of that class, and to make them less dissatisfied when comparing their lot with that of the rest of the community, if, instead of being obliged to resort to the brook or the spring for their beverage, they could enjoy some share of the produce of the land on which they are employed in the shape of a draught of beer. I am not one myself who attaches very much importance to the beverage which men may take. I think more depends upon what they eat than upon what they drink. But I would like to lay down this as a rule in dealing with this question and with all other questions—that we do not sit here to legislate with the view of passing sumptuary laws either with respect to

The consumption of beer.

drink, or meat, or clothing. We do not pretend by our fiscal regulations to make men moral, and I think it is quite out of place to introduce the subject at all in discussions like the present. I should say that it would be a disadvantageous argument, in treating this question, to contend that by repealing the malt tax you would necessarily have a very much larger individual consumption of beer. If I, instead of my honourable and gallant friend, were dealing with this question, I would never put the case upon that argument. It does not follow if you take the duty off malt that the present beer drinkers will increase their consumption of beer. You may have many mouths drinking beer that now cannot get it at all, and you may have those who now drink beer consuming the same quantity at a very much less expense. Honourable gentlemen will find a passage in Adam Smith upon this very subject. He says in a passage which is well worthy of consideration, speaking as an advocate of the repeal of the malt tax, just as he would have advocated a repeal of the corn law, that it does not follow that because intoxicating drinks are cheap, therefore the people in the country where they are cheap should be necessarily intemperate; and he mentions the fact that in those countries where wine is cheap there the population is generally the most sober. And he states, as a fact, that though the regiments in France that had been brought from the northern provinces into the southern portion of the country were found at first to indulge their appetites to some excess, yet that familiarity with the cheap wines of the south speedily produced an effect rather sobering than otherwise. Now, who are the sober people amongst us at the present moment? Why, doubtless, the great progress in sobriety in this country during the last thirty or forty years has been precisely amongst those classes who have had in abundance the means of intoxication always at their hands. My honourable friend here (Mr. Lawson), who, I believe, wishes, with strictly benevolent views, to put temptation out of the working-man's way by the regulation of the

Sobriety and cheap liquor.

number of public-houses, would not pretend to say that he would deprive any one of the fullest opportunities of indulging in his wine or his beer in his own house. I therefore think it would be wrong to assume that necessarily there would be a greatly increased consumption of beer arising out of a change in this law. I tell you what would happen if you abolished the malt tax. I have no doubt there would be a great consumption of other excisable and duty-paying articles. If beer were cheaper, the families of working men would consume more tea, sugar, tobacco, and other things that pay duty. Therefore, it is quite possible that you might have a very large increase in your revenue, arising from these other sources, without necessarily implying any large increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquor.

Well, we now come to consider the question of the financial difficulty of this great problem. I assume that whatever is proposed to be done would be done with the view of the ultimate abolition of this tax. I do not say that any Chancellor of the Exchequer would be likely to propose to do this in any one year; but if I were dealing with this question out of the House, I should look to total repeal, and nothing less, as my ultimate object. Now, where is the difficulty in the way of accomplishing this? I exhort my honourable and gallant friend opposite not to think of ever putting on a substitute in the form of another tax in the place of this. Let him depend upon it that this House will never put on any other tax as a substitute for the malt tax. How, then, are you to meet this case? Well, in the first place, if you abolished this tax, you would not lose that amount of revenue, because there would be a decided increase from other sources. In the next place, you do not intend to abolish it all in one year—that is certain. Well, then, I maintain you must all steadily look to a reduction of our expenditure. I consider that we have been running riot in our extravagance. For the first five years after I entered this House, when Sir Robert Peel was at the head of affairs, we spent £20,000,000

Financial difficulties.

Reduce expenditure.

a year less than the average of the last five years. Will anybody pretend to tell me there is not a margin for saving and economy in that? This Parliament has been unparalleled in its extravagance. Names have been given to different parliaments. One was called 'the Long Parliament,' another was called 'the Unlearned Parliament,' and this ought to be called for ever 'the Prodigal Parliament.' Well, then, you have an opportunity for economy, in watching stringently your expenditure, and you have the natural growth of revenue which comes from reduction of taxation; and if you remain at peace you will have the growth arising from the elasticity and buoyancy of your finances which leaves you every year with a surplus of two or three millions. All this leads me to conclude, that if honourable gentlemen opposite are in earnest about this matter, they may ultimately accomplish what they have now in hand. What I should recommend to my honourable and gallant friend is that he should not take the opinion of the House on this motion. If he does, I should be in the same predicament as three or four other gentlemen who have spoken, who, while favourable to the motion, tell us that they shall be obliged to vote against it, inasmuch as it has been put in antagonism with the reduction on sugar. I should hope that my honourable and gallant friend will withdraw the motion, having the advantages of the discussion, which is all he can hope for at this moment, bearing in mind, too, that these are questions which are not carried in a session. One or two gentlemen have spoken of free trade in corn as if it were carried straight off; but I know, to my cost, that that question took us seven years of weary labour. You have now only just begun. You have only to press this question as a producer's question in addition to the interests of the consumer, and with that perseverance which I think will characterize honourable gentlemen opposite, when they are once roused to a question, and they are sure soon to accomplish their object, to the great benefit not only of that part of the community which they represent, but also to the satisfaction of all classes.

IV.—WAGES AND CHEAP FOOD

On the Results of Free Trade in England

This letter was addressed by John Bright to a member of the Hackney Liberal Association, during the by-election which ensued on the death of Fawcett. Professor Stuart, the Liberal candidate, was returned by a large majority.

I observe that your Tory candidate and his friends are seeking support as fair traders in opposition to free traders. They complain that we are allowed by our Government and our tariff, to buy freely all the products of foreign countries, and that, owing to some foreign tariffs, we cannot sell our own products as freely as we wish to do. We can fix the duties in our own tariff and on our imports, but we cannot fix the duties in the tariffs of foreign countries and on their imports. All this is true enough and plain enough, but what is not plain and not true is the strange belief held by fair traders that being injured by not being able to sell so freely as we wish to do, owing to duties in foreign tariffs, we should remedy the evil by giving up the power to buy freely by putting duties on our own tariff.

To sell freely would be a great advantage, as to buy freely is a great advantage; but neither to buy freely nor to sell freely, as the fair traders recommend, would, in my view, enormously increase the injury to our trade arising from the foreign tariffs which now obstruct our foreign trade.

Let your workmen reflect on the change in their condition which free trade has wrought within the last forty years since the reform of our tariff. The corn law was intended to keep

wheat at the price of 80*s.* the quarter; it is now under 40*s.* the quarter. The price of tea is now less than the duty which was paid upon it in former days. Sugar is not more than one-third of its cost when a monopoly of East and West India sugar existed. As to wages in Lancashire and Yorkshire, the weekly income of thousands of workers in factories is nearly if not quite double that paid before the time when free trade was established. The wages of domestic servants in the county from which I come are, in most cases, doubled since that time. A working brick-setter told me lately that his wages are now 7*s.* 6*d.* per day; formerly he worked at the rate of 4*s.* per day. Some weeks ago I asked an eminent upholsterer in a great town in Scotland what had been the change in wages in his trade. He said that thirty or forty years ago he paid a cabinet-maker 12*s.* per week; he now pays him 28*s.* per week. If you inquire as to the wages of farm labourers, you will find them doubled, or nearly doubled, in some counties, and generally over the whole country advanced more than 50 per cent., or one-half, whilst the price of food and the hours of labour have diminished. It may be said that milk and butter and meat are dear, which is true; but these are dear because our people, by thousands of families, eat meat who formerly rarely tasted it, and because our imports of these articles are not sufficient to keep prices at a more moderate rate. The fair traders tell you that trade in some branches is depressed, which is true, though their statements are greatly exaggerated. We have had a great depression in agriculture, caused mainly by several seasons of bad harvests, and some of our traders have suffered much from a too rapid extension in prosperous years. I have known the depression in trade to be much greater than it is now, and the sufferings of traders and workmen during our time of protection, previous to 1842, when the reform of our tariff began, were beyond all comparison greater than they are now. In foreign countries where high tariffs exist, say in Russia, in France, and in the United States, the disturbance

and depression of manufacturing industries are far greater at this moment than with us. Their tariffs make it impossible for them to have a larger foreign trade; we have a wide field for our exports, which they cannot enter. We have an open market for the most part in South America, in China, in Japan, and with a population of more than 200,000,000 in our Indian Empire, and in our colonies, with the exception of Canada, and the province of Victoria in Australia. The field for our manufacturing industry is far wider than that for any other manufacturing nation in the world, and I cannot doubt that we shall gradually rise from the existing depression, and shall reap even greater gain from our policy of free trade in the future than we have reaped in the past. In 1846, when the cruel corn law was repealed, we did not convert our landowners and farmers, we only vanquished them. Even now there remains among them a longing for protection; they cling still to the ancient heresy, and, believing in the ignorance or forgetfulness of our working men, they raise their old cry at every election of members of Parliament. If I have any influence with your own or any electors, let me assure them that for centuries past there has been no change of our national policy which has conferred and will confer so great good on our industrious people as that policy of free trade which the two greatest ministers of our time, Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone, have fixed, I cannot doubt for ever, on the statute-book of our country.

The recent contest in the United States has overthrown the party of protection and monopoly. It may prove a great blessing to the English nation on the American continent. When England and America shall have embraced the policy of free industry the whole fabric of monopoly the world over will totter to its fall.

V.—TO FARM LABOURERS ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

This letter was written by John Bright on December 29th, 1884, in reply to a request for guidance from Warwickshire. The farm labourers had just been enfranchised.

You suggest that I should write something that may be of use to the new voters under the Franchise Bill which has just become law. If I were speaking to your new voters, and especially if to those who are farm labourers, I should say something like that I am about to write.

I should tell them that there is a great difference between the two parties which will ask for their votes in the spring of 1886—a difference which they may see in all things during the last fifty years. The Reform Bill of 1832 was carried by the Liberal party against the violent opposition of the Tories. It was the first step, in our time, towards a better representation of the people in Parliament. In the year 1867, now seventeen years since, the suffrage was first given to workingmen, when household suffrage was granted in our cities and towns. This was gained by the agitation promoted by the Liberal party in the country, and was pressed upon the Tory Government during the discussions in the House of Commons in the session of 1867.

The Liberal party in the country and in Parliament has advocated household suffrage for the counties for several years, during which the Tories have constantly opposed it. This year the Bill giving household suffrage in the counties

has become law, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Tories to obstruct it.

The Liberal party gave to all voters the protection of the ballot, which the Tory party strongly opposed. Every voter is now able to vote as he wishes. No landlord, or farmer, or employer of any kind can know how any vote is given—and now the poorest man is as safe in giving his vote as the richest. This is a great safeguard for the voter. The arrangement of seats under the Bill now before Parliament is the work of the Liberal party. The Tory party when in office did not propose it, and it is only under a Government of Liberals that so great and wise a measure could have been passed into law.

Political freedom, therefore, and a real representation of the people, rich and poor, the country owes to the Liberal party. But we owe much more to the Liberal party.

We owe to it the repeal of the cruel corn law, and the removal of the hindrances to trade, caused by monstrous taxes on almost everything brought from foreign countries. The corn law, by shutting out foreign corn, was intended to keep the price of wheat at, or near, 80*s.* the quarter; its natural price without corn law is probably about 40*s.* the quarter.

Bread is, and will be, about half the price at which the corn law intended it to be in all years when English harvests were not good.

A great minister, Sir Robert Peel, repealed the corn law. The agitation of the Anti-Corn-Law League, the Irish famine in 1846, and the help and votes of the Liberals in Parliament, with the support of a portion of the Tories, gave him power to repeal this wicked and cruel law. Some of the Tories are now proposing to restore it, and again make the labourers' bread dearer, so that farmers may be able to pay rents which they say are too high unless the law is put in force to raise the market price of wheat, and the baker's price of bread! The Tory party and country gentlemen were very angry with

Sir Robert Peel because he would not maintain the corn law. His party deserted him, and drove him from office and from power because he preferred the interests of the nation, and the comforts of the labouring classes to dear bread and high rents for the landowners.

When the corn law was gone, other bad things went with it. The Liberal Government which came in after Sir Robert Peel destroyed the monopoly in sugar. Other great changes have been made, chiefly by Mr. Gladstone, supported always by the Liberals. The new voters who are not young will remember the price of bread in former days; they will know that sugar is about one-third of the price it once was, and that they now can buy three pounds for the price they formerly paid for one pound; and they know that tea costs less now than the tax alone which was imposed upon it before the free traders began the reform in our tariff and the repeal of duties on imports from foreign countries. And during these years there has been a general and large rise in the wages of working-men and labourers in all parts of the country. Farm-labourers' wages have risen one-half or more, and in some counties they have nearly doubled since the days of protection and the corn law.

But the Liberal party has done more than give the mass of our people a real representation and a real power in Parliament. It has done more than give them freedom for their industry. It has given them the means to understand what Parliament is doing, and what it ought to do, for it has given them the vast advantage of a free press, and to their children the not less vast advantage of cheap and good schools. Now almost every labourer can have an admirable newspaper weekly for a penny, or every day one somewhat smaller in size, but not less admirable in quality, for a halfpenny! Newspapers, not so large and not so good as these, cost sevenpence when the Liberal party began to deal with this question. The taxes on paper and on the printed newspaper strangled the press, and the tax on advertisements was as great when a gardener sought

a situation and employment as when a rich man advertised a mansion or an estate.

All this is gone—these scandals and cruelties of the past are gone. The Liberals spoke and worked; the Tory opposition, step by step, was overcome, and one after another these great evils vanished, and no longer disgrace English legislation.

And what of the cheap and good schools? The child of the labourer may gain an education that will give him as good a prospect, as regards labour and trade, as the child of a richer man has. He will grow up with a sense of self-respect; he will see before him a path along which he may find independence and comfort. The present gain of this is great; the future gain is beyond all we can estimate.

And what of the future? What will household suffrage in counties and the new arrangement of seats do for the new voters, and especially for the farm labourers? If the new voters know their interests, and if the Liberals are returned in great power to the new Parliament, two things will have a chance of being done. The land laws will be reformed, and much of them reformed out of existence. In past times and now our land laws have been framed to protect the great estates of great families. Great estates lead to great farms, and great farms lead to the result that it is almost impossible for farm labourers to become farmers, and thus the path of the intelligent and hard-working labourer to an improved position and condition for himself and his family is barred and blocked. The holding of great estates under entails and settlements, and often heavily mortgaged and burdened, makes it impossible for them to be well cultivated, and thus the demand for labour is lessened, and a better rate of wages is prevented. This whole system of land laws must be broken down, and the new and great reform will do little if it does not get rid, as far as possible, of the mischiefs of the past.

The game laws, too, will come under revision. Parliament may accept the principle that the creatures which live on and from the land are the property, if there be any property in them,

of the farmer, at whose cost, and by whose labour, the farm is cultivated. When this principle is admitted in our law, then what is called 'preservation of game' may cease; murderous conflicts on game preserves may be no longer known, and labourers may not have before them an almost constant and irresistible temptation to become poachers and breakers of the law. If the new voters will help the Liberal party, the Liberal landowners, the Liberal farmers, the Liberal shopkeepers and tradesmen, in the towns and villages of the counties and county divisions, we may see much good done by a new Parliament.

If what I have written shall give information or useful counsel, I shall be glad. I have for more than forty years endeavoured to press forward in the country and in Parliament the changes to which I have referred. They have all, so far as they have been effected, in my view, been of great service to the country. The period of reform is not yet ended; it will rest, in no small degree, on the good sense of the new constituency, combined with what is intelligent and just in the old body of electors, whether, as on two past occasions, in 1832 and in 1867, a large measure of electoral reform shall be followed by great measures of improvement in the legislation of our country. Perhaps I have written at too great length in reply to your letter—if so you will forgive me. The subject is too grave and too great to be treated in a paragraph.

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